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THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS
COMPARED
WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

COMPARED
WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE SONG OF SOLOMON COMPARED WITH OTHER PARTS
OF SCRIPTURE."

Newton

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NOTE.

As this work was passing through the press, it pleased the Lord to take to himself the writer; so the book comes forth, not so much as the production of a fellow-saint on earth, as the message of one now with her Saviour. As such let it be received.

This explanation will account for the incomplete form in which it appears. It was not the Lord's will that it should be completed; but her own testimony to the personal benefit she derived from pondering over this portion of His Word is worth recording, as an incentive to others to study it as prayerfully as she did. It was only three weeks before her departure, that when speaking of her delight in remembering "Him we love in the night-watches," (her own words), she went on to say, "There is something so inconceivably precious in the firm conviction that as to one's safety *it is all done*. When you draw near, or feel drawing near to the end, it is nothing but the great foundation realities of the gospel that will do: you

seem not to care for anything else. It is just Christ's finished work and nothing else that will satisfy you then. Hebrews has taught me so much—what sin is, by what it cost—I owe it so much! Oh! it has been well worth * any suffering, to learn out of it the need of Christ's salvation—what sin is—and there is no reality, at least no depth in the reality of your religion till you have learnt in this way for yourself. It makes me feel that we don't enter into the hundredth, nor the thousandth, nor the millionth part of what there is for us in Christ, or we could not live as we do."

* This was in allusion to a previous remark as to the bodily suffering which the effort of carrying on the present work had latterly caused her.

INTRODUCTION.

THE peculiar preciousness of this Epistle is, that it is so full of Christ. Its peculiar character is, that it reveals Him as the sum and substance of all that had been shadowed forth concerning Him in the Jewish law; for it was written to Jews and not to Gentiles, and Christians only enter into its depth and richness in proportion as they know themselves to be spiritual Israelites—"an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesu Christ," (1 Pet. ii. 5).

It was addressed to "the Hebrews," the earliest name by which this chosen people was distinguished from the rest of mankind; a name which points us backward as far as to Eber, the ancestor of Abraham! God has for ever endeared this name to His chosen ones by calling Himself "the Lord God of the Hebrews," (Exod. iii. 10).

Are we Hebrews of this spiritual seed? and is the Lord thus our God? This will be a test by which we may know whether Jesus is indeed our Saviour. If we are the people of God as the Israelites were—if we have been in bondage as they were—if we are travellers through the wilderness—or if we want a better rest than they obtained under Joshua in the land of Canaan, it is by this Epistle we shall see that *JESUS will be all this, yea, everything to us.*

This Epistle shews Him, in the first place, as *the Son of God*, equal to and of the self-same nature with God, (Heb. i.). It shews Him, in the next place, as *the Son of Man*, of one nature with ourselves, and of “the seed of Abraham,” (Heb. ii.). It shews Him *superior far to Moses*, in that He was the Son over His own house, while Moses was a servant in the house of God, (Heb. iii.). It shews Him as *the true Joshua*, who leads His people to an everlasting rest, (Heb. iv.). It shews Him as *far greater than Aaron*, for He is without sin, and needed not to offer “for himself,” (Heb. v.). It shews Him as the *true Melchisedec*, “the priest upon his throne,” without beginning of days or end of life, (Heb. vii.). It sets forth His priesthood as the essential fulfilment of all that was shadowed forth by the priests under the law, and shews His people as the true spiritual Levites who are “joined” with Him in

the service of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. (Heb. viii.-x.) It shews Him as "the author and finisher of faith,"—"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,"—"the great Shepherd of the sheep,"—the Alpha and Omega of all! (Heb. xi., xii., xiii.)

"IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US."

NEW YORK

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

CHAPTER I.

JESUS THE SON OF GOD.

VER. 1, 2. "GOD, WHO AT SUNDRY TIMES, AND IN DIVERS MANNERS, SPAKE IN TIME PAST UNTO THE FATHERS BY THE PROPHETS, HATH IN THESE LAST DAYS SPOKEN UNTO US BY HIS SON."

WITH what rapidity the mind of the Apostle glances at the "*time past*," wherein God had spoken unto the fathers by the prophets! He had spoken by "Enoch, the seventh from Adam," (Jude 14, 15); by "Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness," (2 Pet. ii. 5); by Moses—even "as a man speaketh to his friend," (Exod. xxxiii. 11); by David, the "man after his own heart," (Acts xiii. 22); and by Daniel, "a man greatly beloved."

He had spoken "at sundry times and in divers manners." At one time from the bush, in the lonely desert; at another in pomp and majesty, from Mount

Sinai. Now, in the silence of the night season to the child Samuel; and now, from above the mercy-seat, in the most holy place, to the high priest Aaron. Once, to Ezekiel, in visions of surpassing glory; and again to Elijah, in the "still small voice." (Exod. iii. xix.; 1 Sam. iii.; Exod. xxv.; Ezek. i.; 1 Kings xix.)

In almost every page of their writings, the voice of Jehovah is heard, echoing and re-echoing from one to another: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying;" "And the word of the Lord came unto me;"—"Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts;"—"Thus saith the Lord;" until at length we read from the latest of their prophets, "The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi." It was thus that Jehovah spake "unto the fathers by the prophets." It was God's voice throughout. Whoever the messenger, the message came from God.

And "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers *by the prophets*, hath in these last days spoken unto us *by his Son*." God, then, is still the speaker; only *the messenger* is changed.

How like "an Hebrew of the Hebrews," to introduce his message concerning Jesus to the Hebrew Christians on this wise! The opening of this Epistle stands forth in remarkable contrast to the openings of all his other epistles. For in writing to the Gentile believers, he could introduce himself to them either as

the apostle, or servant, or prisoner of Jesus Christ, being himself the Apostle of the Gentiles. But to the Jews he could not state his apostleship; and maintaining perfect silence concerning himself and his gospel message, he abruptly and boldly sets forth Christ as the messenger God had chosen to succeed their own prophets.

This left them without excuse. If the word of God came with authority through one messenger, it came with equal authority through another. God had spoken "in time past," and God was speaking still in the "last days."

He had spoken before "at sundry times," he spoke now for the "last" time. He had spoken before by his "prophets," he spoke now "by his Son." The person by whom he speaks is changed, but it is *from himself* the message still comes. The messenger is now his own Son.

So when we open the Gospels we read—"Verily, verily, *I* say unto you;" "Then said *Jesus*;" "And *the Lord* said;" "Then spake *Jesus*;" "These things have *I* spoken unto you," &c. Oh for Mary's spirit to sit at Jesus' feet and hear *his* word!

"*His Son.*" These two words open to us the very essence of all that follows in this chapter. Its theme is,

JESUS, AS SON OF GOD.

"*His Son.*" Did Abraham tenderly love his Isaac?

Did Jacob fondly love his Joseph? Did David yearn over his Absalom? How much more did God love and delight in "*His Son*" Jesus!

Oh what deep meaning lies hidden in those two words, "His Son!" "His only begotten Son." One must be a father, to understand even *the human shadow*!—the divine reality, who can fathom? So did he love him, whilst he was come down to earth, to deliver his Father's message, that once and again he opened the heavens that he might give *expression* to the feelings of his heart towards his absent Son, and that man might hear, as it were, from his own lips the gracious words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17, and xvii. 5). How sweet to linger over those words, and seek to share, in our feeble measure, something of his holy enjoyment and delight in Jesus. How sweet to know that from day to day, and from hour to hour, God the Father is for ever enjoying himself in his well-beloved Son.

Jesus, too, delighted to have and own God for his Father. "*Abba, Father,*" did he not say? (Mark xiv. 36). In the Gospel of John alone, we have it recorded more than *one hundred times* that the name of "Father" was on his lips. He came to do his Father's will, to keep his Father's commandments, and *to deliver his Father's message*. "Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak;" "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself:

but the Father, that dwelleth in me, *He* doeth the works ;" (John xii. 50 ; xiv. 10). Thus in these last days, God hath spoken unto us "by his Son."

JESUS THE SON OF GOD,—THE HEIR OF GOD.

VER. 2. "WHOM HE HATH APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS."

"If a son, then an heir," (Gal. iv. 7). And this is pre-eminently true of *the first-born son*. What a cluster of glories bursts upon the mind, in contemplating Jesus as the heir to all his Father's possessions ! "Heir of all things : " he is "Lord of *all*." There is nothing that is not put under him, (Acts x. 36). And what a precious title he bears in Rom. viii. 29—"the first-born among many brethren !" "For the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that *we* are the children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and *joint-heirs with Christ*," (Rom. viii. 16, 17). How wondrous to be linked in with the very glory which belongs to Jesus as Son of God ! "He that overcometh shall *inherit all things* ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son," (Rev. xxi. 7). No wonder that the Apostle John should have exclaimed,—"*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God !*" (1 John iii. 1).

Jesus was the heir in his own right. Yet there is something deeply precious to the believer in the

expression, "whom he hath *appointed* heir of all things." It is *His* appointment who says, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," (Isa. xlv. 10); so that we may doubly rejoice, so to speak, in this marked security of the heirship of Jesus. The kings of the earth may set themselves together against him, but "the decree" is gone forth: "The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art *my Son*; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for *thine inheritance*, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Ps. ii. 1-9). "Heir of *all* things."

THE SON OF GOD CREATING.

VER. 2. "BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS."

"When he prepared the heavens, *I* was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth, &c.; when he appointed the foundations of the earth: *then I was by him*," &c. (Prov. viii. 22-31). It was Jehovah's Fellow, "by whom he made the worlds." "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth, (Ps. xxxiii. 6); not by the word of his mouth merely, but by the Word Incarnate. As it is said, in Gen. i. of the creation of all things, "And GOD SAID," for "the Word was with God, and *the Word was God*. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made," (John i. 1, 3).

Oh, what thoughts of the divinity of Jesus must have filled the Apostle's mind as he penned these words!

"By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist," (Col. i. 16, 17). And who is this?—it is "*His dear Son*," (Col. i. 13, or, as it is in the margin, "the Son of his love").

Well may the redeemed in glory sing, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created," (Rev. iv. 11).

THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD.

VER. 3. "WHO BEING THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS GLORY."

The glory of Jehovah's glory is his well-beloved Son. Jesus is the brightness of the glory of the Father. But what can our poor lisping, stammering tongues tell of "glory?" Glimpses of it have been seen, but its fulness who can conceive? "For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables," writes St Peter, "when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father *honour and glory*, when there came such a

voice to him *from the excellent glory*, This is my beloved Son," (2 Pet. i 16, 17). "The fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. *And they saw his glory*," (Luke ix. 29-32).

Perhaps it was to the same scene of his transfiguration-glory that John alluded, when he wrote, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," (John i. 14);—a glory belonging to the Son; who is begotten in his Father's likeness! But all this was merely as the glimpse one gets through the lattice. It was something beyond this of which Paul was speaking: it was a manifestation of his glory, not as Son of Man, but as Son of God. Oh, with what deep solemnity should we contemplate it! The nearest approach we can conceive of to this glory was the shekinah of old, seen only by the high priest once a year, not without blood, when he entered within the veil. "The tabernacle shall be sanctified by my *glory*," (Exod. xxix. 43; xl. 34, 35). It was the shining forth, the effulgence of the glory of Jehovah. It was seen in vision by Ezekiel, immediately before it took its departure from the temple, in unequalled splendour and brilliancy. "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, *and a brightness was about it*, and out of the midst thereof *as the colour of amber*, out

of the midst of the fire," (Ezek. i. 4). The "amber" is a compound of brass and gold, called by Ezekiel *chasmal*, and from Ezek. i. 27 we learn that it was "the appearance of a man" that gave forth the metallic brilliance, and it is added, that "it had brightness round about;" and again, "this was the appearance of the likeness of *the glory* of the Lord," (ver. 28). Brass and gold are perhaps the two most lustrous metals, and of these two metals most of the vessels in the tabernacle were composed; those of the outer courts of brass, and those in the holiest of gold. These two metals, fused into one perfect compound, unequalled for glory and preciousness, are used by Ezekiel to picture the glory of the Son of Man. Can anything more exquisitely or more vividly convey the idea of that "brightness of glory" of which the Apostle speaks? The very words he uses are found in Ezek. x. 4, "The house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of *the brightness of the glory of Jehovah.*"

The illustration would be perfectly understood and appreciated by those Hebrew Christians to whom he wrote. All their thoughts of the glory of God's presence would be naturally connected with the shekinah; and, therefore, when he would shew them, in Jesus, the antitype of all their types and shadows, he presents him as the very essence of that shekinah-glory. *He is "the brightness of glory."*

The brightness of his *Father's* glory. Jesus himself loved to think of it in this light. How beautifully he prayed in John xvii. 1-5, "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. I *have* glorified thee on the *earth*. And *now*, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, *with the glory which I had with thee before the world was!*"

How wonderful to know that he intends to present us, even us, "faultless *before the presence of his glory!*" (Jude 24).

THE SON OF GOD BEARING THE IMPRESS OF THE
FATHER.

VER. 3. "AND THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON."

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). There is more than representation: there is identity. And the word chosen by the Apostle beautifully expresses it. It comes from the root, "to engrave with a tool," and implies that sort of engraving which *transfers* the image of one thing to another, as the stamp in coining money, or the impression made upon wax. "It is an Egyptian representation of another thing, by an expression of its likeness upon it," (Owen). All, therefore, that God is, is, as it were, *transferred* to the Son; or rather, the Son is the express image of *all that the Father is*. "Of his person," that is of *himself*,—"the image of the invisible God;" (Col. i. 15,

2 Cor. iv. 4; Phil. ii. 6). "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John i. 18).

Man's finite language fails to give expression to these divine realities. Yet, scanty as our best thoughts must ever be, it is well to think of and ponder in our hearts the brilliancy of the glory of Jesus, as he *expresses* to us the Father. It is sweet to prostrate ourselves before him in his glorious majesty, as well as to draw nigh unto him in his lowly humanity. It kindles feelings of lively adoration, and teaches us to begin on earth the song that is sung in heaven, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever," (Rev. v. 13); "*the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal,*"—for, "such as the Father is, *such is the Son,* and such is the Holy Ghost."

THE SON OF GOD UPHOLDING.

VER. 3. "AND UPHOLDING ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER."

"*Speak the word only,*" said the Roman centurion, "and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man, under authority, having soldiers under me; and *I say* to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." This simple faith in the mere "*word*" of Jesus, was in his esteem "*great faith,*" (Matt. viii. 8-10).

While, on the other hand,—“How is it that ye have *no faith?*” was his rebuke to his disciples, when they were filled with fear as if his “word” were insufficient to preserve them in a moment of danger; see Mark iv. 37–41. “There arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, *and said* unto the sea, Peace, be still.—And there was a great calm.” But they were surprised, and feared exceedingly, saying, “What manner of *man* is this, that even the winds and the sea *obey him?*” *They knew him not as God.* They did not understand that he was the upholder of the universe, while asleep on the pillow! Hence their wonder and surprise. On another occasion we read that “they were astonished at his doctrine; for his *word* was *with power,*” (Luke iv. 32). “What a *word* is this!” they exclaimed, “for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out,” (Luke iv. 36).

But Paul knew him as the Son of God—creating and upholding. Nor is the past act of creation a whit more wonderful than the present act of upholding. It needed that Jesus must be Jehovah—the great “*I AM,*” or he could not be ever “upholding” what his hands had made. On his existence hangs the conti-

nuance of every created thing. Scoffers little think what testimony they are giving to the all-powerful word of the Son of God in "upholding all things," when they affirm—"all things *continue* as they were from the beginning of the creation," (2 Peter iii. 4). It is gloriously true. "The heavens *declare* the glory of God, and the firmament *sheweth* his handywork. Day unto day *uttereth* speech, and night unto night *sheweth* knowledge," (Ps. xix. 1, 2). Every leaf of every tree in the largest forest on this earth is moment by moment supplied with sap; and every living creature to the smallest insect he has made, is moment by moment supplied with life. "In him we *live*, and move, and have our being," (Acts xvii. 28). It is an ever-present act of "upholding." Oh, what an idea it gives of his omnipotence! "Fire and hail, snow and vapours, stormy wind *fulfilling his word*," (Ps. cxlviii. 8). "Who shut up the sea with doors," was the question of God to Jacob, out of the whirlwind; "and set bars and doors, *and said*, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" (Job xxxviii. 8-11). "When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens," &c. &c. (Job xxxvii.; Jer. x. 13). "The voice of the Lord is powerful: the voice of the Lord is full of majesty," (Ps. xxix. 4). What precious comfort there is for the tried child of God in believing that when the waves of affliction roll over him, and in

the onward course of events he sees the gathering clouds and darkening sky, and threatenings of a fearful upheaving of all things; yet all things are upheld by the word of Christ's power to fulfil his own purposes of love! "When it is said by the word of his power, it denotes the unspeakable facility of Omnipotent power in its operations," (Owen).

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD, ONCE SUFFERING, NOW
REIGNING.

VER. 3. "WHEN HE HAD BY HIMSELF PURGED OUR SINS, SAT DOWN
ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH."

The Apostle does not dwell here on the thought of the sufferings and death of Jesus: it is *but a backward glance* to earth, from the height of glory in which his whole soul was absorbed. Just as in the visions of heavenly glory, John saw in the midst of the throne "a lamb as it had been slain," (Rev. v. 6).

No amount of joy or glory will cause redeeming love to be forgotten. Jesus will be for ever precious to us as the great sin-purger. We can never, never forget when we look at *him*, that he "*by himself* purged our sins." "By himself;" yes, "for *he* is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap," (Mal. iii. 2, 3). The two-fold image is employed to set forth the completeness of the work. He is like the fire wherein all our dross is consumed (for "*he bare our sins*!"), and he is like the soap of the fuller, wherewith the clothes are

"thoroughly"* washed; yea, "so as no fuller on earth can white them!" (Mark ix. 3; Ps. li. 2, 7).

"Worthy is the Lamb *that was slain*," will be the song, even now, of the myriads who surround the throne.

But this act of Jesus, unlike the *present* act of "upholding," will be commemorated only as a *past* and "finished" work. "It is *done*." The sins are "*purged*" away. "The Lamb that was slain," is alive for evermore. There is no more suffering to be anticipated, no more sorrow to be endured. "It is *finished*." Oh! there is a depth of meaning unutterably precious in the use of the past tense here. "When he had by himself *purged* our sins, (he) sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." How deeply interesting in *this act* of sin-purging, to hear from a Roman centurion the striking acknowledgment, "Truly this was the *Son of God*," (Matt. xxvii. 54). Even in his sufferings upon the cross, he was known as Son of God; how much more now that he is sitting at God's right hand!

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our

* There are two words in Hebrew which signify to wash: the one signifies a washing of the surface only, the other a washing which pervades the very substance of the thing. The name *fuller* is derived from this latter word. And it is to this that David alludes in his strong and beautiful metaphor, (Ps. li. 2, 7), "*Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*" So has Jesus "*purged*" us.

sins in his own blood,—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen," (Rev. i. 5, 6). The sufferings are past; the glory eternally remains. He is sitting now "on the right hand of the Majesty on high." The highest place in heaven is his, though he stooped to take the lowest place on earth. Once he toiled on foot along this dreary world, till "wearied with his journey," he sat down to rest on Jacob's well! (John iv. 6). But now he has "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high!" Oh how precious to his pilgrim-followers, to look up and see him seated on his throne, at rest for ever! "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the *majesty*: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art *exalted* as head above all," (1 Chron. xxix. 11).

THE SON OF GOD "BETTER THAN THE ANGELS."

VER. 4, 5. "BEING MADE SO MUCH BETTER THAN THE ANGELS, AS HE HATH BY INHERITANCE OBTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT NAME THAN THEY. FOR UNTO WHICH OF THE ANGELS SAID HE AT ANY TIME, THOU ART MY SON, THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE? AND AGAIN, I WILL BE TO HIM A FATHER, AND HE SHALL BE TO ME A SON?"

"Unto us a child is born, unto us *a son* is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: *and his name shall be called* Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," (Isa. ix. 6).

This is the "more excellent name" which angels cannot have. For angels are neither sons of God, nor heirs of God. Jesus is "*the only-begotten* of the Father," (John i. 14; and iii. 16). And God hath "highly exalted him, and given him a name which is *above every name*: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the *Father*," (Phil. ii. 9-11). "For it pleased the Father" that his Son should have "the pre-eminence" in all things, (Col. i. 18, 19). He has "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," (Eph. i. 20, 21). "His name shall be for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun," (Ps. lxxii. 17); or, "as a son to continue his father's name for ever," (margin). So spake David concerning his son Solomon, as a type of the Lord Jesus: comp. 2 Sam. vii. 14; for David had a father's heart of love to Solomon. Sweet is the mutual interchange of parental and filial affection. "I will be to him a *father*." The Hebrew word is very expressive: it implies a natural outgoing of affection.

But angels have never known what it is to have a father. They have not *felt* the meaning of those words.

"Like as *a father* pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Or, "I will spare them, as a man *spareth his own son* that serveth him," (Ps. ciii. 13; Mal. iii. 17). They are strangers to those yearnings of parental affection so beautifully expressed in Jer. xxxi. 20, "Is Ephraim *my dear son*? is he a pleasant *child*? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: my bowels are troubled for him," &c. Nor can angels love with filial affection. "He shall be to me *a Son*," is a promise in which angels cannot share. They cannot say, "Abba, Father." Even the prodigal son felt what angels cannot feel, when he said, "I will arise and go to *my father*," (Luke xv. 18).

How much more, then, is *Jesus* "better than the angels," being the Only-begotten of the Father, his Son, his "First-born," (Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27), and the heir of all that is his! "O Lord our Lord, *how excellent* is thy name in all the earth!" (Ps. viii. 1).

THE SON OF GOD UPON HIS THRONE.

VER. 6. "AND WHEN HE BRINGETH AGAIN THE FIRST BEGOTTEN INTO THE WORLD, HE SAITH, AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM. (See the Margin.)

VER. 7. "AND OF THE ANGELS HE SAITH, WHO MAKETH HIS ANGELS SPIRITS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE.

VER. 8. "BUT UNTO THE SON HE SAITH, THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOR EVER AND EVER; A SCEPTRE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SCEPTRE OF THY KINGDOM.

VER. 9. "THOU HAST LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND HATED INIQUITY;

THEREFORE GOD, EVEN THY GOD, HATH ANOINTED THEE WITH
THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE THY FELLOWS."

The word "angel" comes from a root signifying "to send;" the word "minister," from the root "to serve or to wait upon," so that angels are the *servants* of Jehovah, *sent forth* by him to do his bidding. How immensely powerful, therefore, is the contrast! The angels go forth to serve,—but the Son sits upon the throne to reign. Even at his first coming, in lowly humiliation, "a multitude of the heavenly host" sang praises at his birth. An angel was sent to Mary to tell her that she should bring forth a son, whose name should be called Jesus, and of whose kingdom there should be no end, &c. (Luke i. 30–33). An angel was sent to the shepherds to bring them the good tidings that the promised child was born, (Luke ii. 8–14). When the devil tempted him, "angels came and ministered unto him," (Matt. iv. 11). How much more, then, when he comes *again* into the world, will "all the angels of God worship him," (Ps. xcvii. 7). It is a psalm full of millennial glory. "All"—not one shall be missing—not one shall be backward in his holy worship. The whole "multitude of the heavenly host" shall worship him with one accord. What a sight it will be—the whole creation in prostrate adoration before Jesus! That very angel who once was commissioned to "strengthen" him in "his agony and bloody sweat," shall then be bidden to "worship him." And oh, what blessed—happy—sinless worship it will be!

It was given to John in Patmos to realise this very scene in the visions of heavenly glory : Rev. iv., v., "A throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders ; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," &c.

The Lamb is "in the midst of the throne ;" the angels are the worshippers who surround it. "And all the angels *stood round about the throne, . . . and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen,*" &c. (Rev. vii. 11, 12). "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens ; and his kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearken- ing unto the voice of his word. Bless the Lord, all ye his hosts ; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure," (Ps. ciii. 19-21). "Praise the Lord from the heavens ; praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, *all* his angels ; praise ye him, *all* his hosts," (Ps. cxlviii. 1, 2).

Oh, how every heart that loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity throbs with holy joy to see him "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows !" How the soul thrills with delight to hear the Father saying unto the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever !" The quotation is from the 45th Psalm ; a psalm full of royalty for it is "touching the king ;" and a psalm full

of preciousness, for the Psalmist declares, "My heart is inditing a *good* matter," (margin: "boileth or bubbleth up"). It is "good" indeed to contemplate the royalty of Jesus. The Lord make many a heart to boil and bubble up with ecstasy of holy joy in meditating on this blessed theme! Christians want to be stirred up to it. "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be *joyful in their king*," (Ps. cxlix. 2).

And what is the secret well-spring of the joy that fills the kingdom of the Lord Jesus? "It is because *righteousness* will flourish there, that rapture will be felt there. It is because heaven is an abode of *purity* that it is an abode of peace and pleasantness. It is because every heart thrills with benevolence, that there is in every heart a beatitude unspeakable. It is love to God that calls forth hallelujahs of ecstasy, which ring eternally in heaven:" for, "by the simple bestowment of *holiness* upon his people, does God in fact infuse into their spirits the great and essential element of heaven's blessedness," (Chalmers). And what is this but the echo or reflection in *them*, of the perfect rectitude which fills the heart of *Jesus*?

"Thou hast *loved righteousness*, and hated iniquity: *therefore* God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." He is the righteous king, and his subjects "follow him" as he leadeth them "in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake" through all the ages of eternity,

(Ps. xxiii. 3; Prov. viii. 20; Isa. xxxii. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6).

It was a wondrous glimpse that Isaiah got of all this: Isa. vi. 1-7, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." No wonder that in such an atmosphere, where only "righteousness" was breathed, he should have felt overpowered with his own vileness—"Then, said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, &c., for mine eyes have seen *the King!*" "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne," (Ps. xcvi. 2).

THE SON OF GOD ETERNALLY "THE SAME."

VER. 10. "AND THOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING HAST LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH; AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF THINE HANDS:

VER. 11. "THEY SHALL PERISH, BUT THOU REMAINEST; AND THEY SHALL ALL WAN OLD AS DOTH A GARMENT;

VER. 12. "AND AS A VESTURE SHALT THOU FOLD THEM UP, AND THEY SHALL BE CHANGED: BUT THOU ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS SHALL NOT FAIL."

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, *even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art*

God," (Ps. xc. 1, 2). "*In the beginning*" he laid the foundations of the earth; and when the earth and the heaven shall have "passed away," and all things become "new," he will be "*the same*," the eternal "I am;" the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," (Rev. xxii. 13): "which is, and which was, and which is to come," (Rev. i. 8); "I am the Lord, I *change not*," (Mal. iii. 6).

"All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth:" but, "the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary!" (Isa. xl. 6, 7, 28).

"The fashion of this world passeth away;" but "thou, O Lord, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation," (1 Cor. vii. 31; Lam. v. 19).

"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment:" for "the heavens and the earth, which are now, are kept in store, reserved unto fire;" for God "hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." But he who created them, and he who removeth them, remains still, when they perish. "They shall perish, *but thou remainest!*" (Isa. li. 6; 2 Pet. iii. 7; Heb. xii. 26). "They shall be changed, but *thou art the same.*" "They shall all wax old, but

thy years shall not fail." "Behold, God is great, and we know him not; neither can the number of his years be searched out," (Job xxxvi. 26). He is "*the King of eternity*," (Jer. x. 10, margin),—"the high and lofty One that *inhabiteth* eternity!" (Isa. lvii. 15).

Owen has beautifully remarked, on the folding up of the heavens as a vesture—"This work of God is compared to the rolling up of a garment, to intimate *the greatness* of him who can do it with such facility. The whole creation is as a garment, wherein he shews his power *clothed* unto men; as he is said to clothe himself 'with light as with a garment,' and *in it* is the *hiding* of his *power*. As a man is hid with a garment, so are the works of creation unto God. He so far makes them his garment, as in them to give out some instances of his power and wisdom; but he is also hid in them. So that by them no creature can come to a perfect knowledge of him. Now, when this work shall cease, and God shall unclothe or unveil all his glory to his saints, so that they shall see him as he is, then will he lay them aside, and fold them up (at least as to that use,) as easily as a man will lay aside a garment that he will wear or use no more. This lies in the metaphor."

No angel could fold up the heavens: how immeasurably greater, then, is Jesus! "O Lord, my God, *thou art very great*," (Ps. civ. 1).

THE ANGELS MINISTERING,—THE SON OF GOD SITTING
TO REIGN.

VER. 13, 14. "BUT TO WHICH OF THE ANGELS SAID HE AT ANY TIME, SIT ON MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES THY FOOTSTOOL? ARE THEY NOT ALL MINISTERING SPIRITS, SENT FORTH TO MINISTER FOR THEM WHO SHALL BE HEIRS OF SALVATION?"

Scripture tells much of the willing service of angels, but never of one who was slow to go forth on his Lord's message, or reluctant to do his Master's work. Never once did an angel say, as Moses did, "Who am I, that I should go?—Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice;—O my Lord, I am not eloquent," &c. (Exod. iii. 11, and iv. 1, 10, 13). No, gladly and willingly do they fulfil the purpose of God concerning them, that they should be "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

When Peter was rescued by an angel while sleeping in the prison between two soldiers, he said, when he was come to himself, "Now I know of a surety that the Lord *hath sent* his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod," &c. (Acts xii. 1-11). When Daniel had passed the night in safety in the lions' den, he told the king in the morning, saying, "My God hath *sent* his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me," &c. (Dan. vi. 22). When

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were preserved in the burning fiery furnace, it was because God had "sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him," (Dan. iii. 28).

Thus the angel Gabriel testifies concerning himself, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; *and am sent* to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings," (Luke i. 19; see also Luke i. 26), — "sent forth to minister."

How willingly have they left the realms of glory to bring down messages to earth!—to Abraham, (Gen. xvii., xviii.);—to Jacob, (Gen. xxxii. 1);—to Lot, (Gen. xix.);—to Hagar, the poor outcast servant of Sarai, (Gen. xvi., xxi.);—to Manoah, (Judges xiii.);—to Daniel, (Dan. ix.);—to Paul in the ship, (Acts xxvii.), &c. "Are they not all ministering spirits?"

We must not think it is less true of them now than heretofore, because they are not now visible as they then were to the natural eye. It is a truth full of comfort to the children of God, that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them," (Ps. xxxiv. 7). Oh for stronger faith to understand more of the full meaning of the precious assurance, that *we are come* "to an innumerable company of angels!" We do not realise the comfort of their unseen agency as we might. "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge concerning thee," &c.

(Ps. xci. 10-12). It is a privilege we enjoy as sons of God, by virtue of our joint-heirship with Jesus. They are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be *heirs* of salvation;" and it is written, "if a son, then an heir."

But angels were never invited to sit down on God's throne. It was to Adonai that Jehovah said, "Sit thou on my right hand." What an argument for the infinite superiority of Jesus over and above the angels! We can scarcely conceive its force to an Hebrew mind. The Messiah, whom they despised and rejected, is he to whom Jehovah said, "Sit thou on my right hand;" a place to which angels never aspired. Do we not love to know he is there? Angels love to see him there: it is their delight to minister for him unceasingly. "Thousand thousands *ministered unto him*, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him," (Dan. vii. 10).

They know no weariness in their ministry, for they "*excel in strength*," (Ps. ciii. 20). The very word "minister," too, would suggest this to one well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures. For in Num. viii. 24-26, ministry is contrasted with service. "This is it that belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service (margin, to war *the warfare*) of the tabernacle of the congregation: and from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, and

shall *serve* no more: *but shall minister*," &c. The word which we render "serve" implies servile and laborious work, whilst that rendered "*minister*" simply means "personal attendance," and generally in holy things. This sacred office the angels unweariedly, unceasingly, delightedly fulfil, from day to day, from year to year, and from century to century!

How passing wonderful it is, that as sons and heirs of God *we*, together *with Jesus*, his "*first-born*," are entitled to the ministrations of angels!

HOW WE SHOULD HEAR WHAT THE SON OF GOD HATH
SPOKEN.

CHAP. II. VER. 1-4. "THEREFORE WE OUGHT TO GIVE THE MORE EARNEST HEED TO THE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE HEARD, LEST AT ANY TIME WE SHOULD LET THEM SLIP. FOR IF THE WORD SPOKEN BY ANGELS WAS STEDFAST, AND EVERY TRANSGRESSION AND DISOBEDIENCE RECEIVED A JUST RECOMPENCE OF REWARD; HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE, IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION; WHICH AT THE FIRST BEGAN TO BE SPOKEN BY THE LORD, AND WAS CONFIRMED UNTO US BY THEM THAT HEARD HIM; GOD ALSO BEARING THEM WITNESS, BOTH WITH SIGNS AND WONDERS, AND WITH DIVERS MIRACLES, AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST, ACCORDING TO HIS OWN WILL?"

The contrast is between the word of angels, and the word of Jesus. "The law," writes the Apostle, "was ordained *by angels* in the hand of a Mediator," (Gal. iii. 19). "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them: he shined forth from Mount

Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them," (Deut. xxxiii. 2). The scene is magnificently described by the Psalmist:—"O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; the earth shook; the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel. The Lord gave the word; *great* was the company of those that published it." For "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, *even thousands of angels*; the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place," (Ps. lxxviii. 7-17). And Exodus xix. describes the tremendous solemnity of that giving of the law. "Every word spoken" there "was stedfast, and every transgression received a just recompence of reward." Again and again did Moses seek to stir up the people to give "earnest heed" to it. "What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous *as all this law*, which I set before you this day? Only *take heed* to thyself, and keep thy soul *diligently, lest thou forget* the things which thine eyes have seen, *and lest they depart from thine heart*," &c. (Deut. iv. 8, 9; vi. 5-17). The word "forget" is literally to relax, to let go, or to let slip from the memory. Is not this precisely what St Paul warned the Hebrews against? Only that he puts it more strongly. For Moses said simply, "Take heed," but Paul says, "We ought to

give the *more earnest heed* to the things which *we* have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."

For Paul is speaking of the things spoken by the Son of God, "*by the Lord*," even by him who is "made so much better than the angels,"—by him whom angels worship. Oh, how little we realise the tremendous guilt of the heedless sinners all around! how little we think of the sin of our own strange heedlessness! How many a dusty Bible tells that no "earnest heed" is given to the words of Jesus; and how the stunted growth of the children in the heavenly family betrays their sad indifference to much that the Lord hath spoken! They are verily walking this earth like spiritual skeletons, famishing with hunger, because they consider not that "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live," (Deut. viii. 3); and we cannot live without giving heed to it. Many do actually die for want. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," "*because they have left off to take heed to the Lord!*" (Hosea iv. 6, 10).

The words are very striking—"let slip," "neglect." It is not the total rejection of the truth all at once; it is the gradual letting it go. As in the parable of the sower, three kinds of hearers out of the four *lost it* after they had heard it; so the many "neglect" this great salvation, and make light of it, going "one to his farm, another to his merchandise," (Mark iv. 14-19; Matt. xxii. 5). They let it slip, or, as it is in the

margin, "*run out*, as leaking vessels." What a striking metaphor!

"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels; *and have not kept it*," (Acts vii. 51-53). So spake Stephen.

May the Lord the Spirit teach us to set a higher value on every word that Jesus has spoken! It is perilous not to do so: "he that rejecteth me, and receiveth *not* my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," (John xii. 48). It is a searching test of our love: "if a man love me, he *will keep my words*;" and the recompence of reward is great—"and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," (John xiv. 23). O for a very "*earnest ear*" to hear!

CHAPTER II.

JESUS THE SON OF MAN.

HEB. ii. 5-18.

THE Apostle had spoken of Jesus in the first chapter as the Son of God ; now he draws the contrast of what he is as Son of Man. The picture is entirely reversed. There he was seen in glory, here in humiliation ; there in power, here in weakness ; there "*much better* than the angels," here "a little *lower* than the angels." There he was seen as "the express image" of God the Father, here as a partaker of flesh and blood. There as the very "brightness of glory," here as a poor, miserable, mortal man. There as sitting enthroned on high, here as one *visited* in an inferior condition. There the eternal and unchangeable One whose years can never fail, here as the suffering One who tastes *death* for every man. The theme, therefore, of this second chapter is

JESUS, AS THE SON OF MAN.

And though it was so blessed to look up, and see him on the right hand of the Majesty on high, it is not less blessed to know him as the brother born for adversity. In all his varied characters, "he is precious." And burdened as we are with bodies of humiliation,

tried as we are by scenes of suffering and death all around us, and tempted as we are by the evil one on every side, we shall find depths of consolation in knowing Jesus as our "Emmanuel, God *with us*," which the longest life of suffering will fail to exhaust, (Matt. i. 23).

But the way in which the Apostle introduces the Lord Jesus to the Hebrews *as Son of Man* is very new and startling. It is by a quotation from the Old Testament Scriptures, shewing

"THE WORLD TO COME" PUT IN SUBJECTION TO THE
SON OF MAN.

CHAP. II. VER. 5-8. "FOR UNTO THE ANGELS HATH HE NOT PUT IN SUBJECTION THE WORLD TO COME, WHEREOF WE SPEAK. BUT ONE IN A CERTAIN PLACE TESTIFIED, SAYING, WHAT IS MAN THAT THOU ART MINDFUL OF HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT THOU VISITEST HIM? THOU MADEST HIM A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS, (margin, 'A LITTLE WHILE INFERIOR TO'); THOU CROWNEST HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOUR, AND DIDST SET HIM OVER THE WORKS OF THY HAND; THOU HAST PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET."

These were the words of David in the 8th Psalm. Nor would any Hebrew doubt for a moment to what they referred. For the expression "the world to come" was a familiar phrase with them, always denoting "the habitable earth to come," as they were looking forward to it in the days of the Messiah's kingdom. (Compare Isa. lxx. 17-25; Prov. viii. 31.) And dominion over it

is promised, not to angels, but to *man*. "God said, Let us make *man* in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth," (Gen. i. 26). One would think that these very words must have been in the Psalmist's mind whilst he wrote this psalm. Nor can we wonder that, as he gazed upon the heavens, the moon, and the stars in all the brilliancy of midnight darkness—so high, so vast, so lofty, and stretched out in such enduring grandeur and majesty over his head, he should exclaim, as he thought upon himself, "What is *man*!"—*man*, formed out of the very dust beneath his feet.

The word in the original is very strong; it involves the idea of frailty or infirmity. And this well suited the Apostle's argument. The very "man" who is subject to infirmity is yet to have dominion over "the world to come." How blessedly true of Jesus! He who for our sakes "became poor," (2 Cor. viii. 9), is to be "the crowned Lord of all!" He who was made "a little lower than (or 'a little while inferior to') the angels" is to have "all things in subjection under his feet!"

How much "lower than the angels," who "excel in strength," was the little babe in the manger of Bethlehem! (Luke ii. 7). How must Jesus have *felt* himself "inferior to the angels," when in the days of his flesh he cried, "Do thou for me, O God the Lord; for I

am *poor and needy*—"I am *feeble* and sore broken," &c. &c. (Ps. cix. 21, 22; Ps. xxxviii. 8; Ps. xxxix. 4). Or, when in the garden of Gethsemane, "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, *strengthening him!*" (Luke xxii. 43).

But it was only for "a little while." Already he is crowned with glory and honour. What were the thirty-three years of his humiliation compared with eternal ages?—is it not "*a little while?*" Has not God even now "raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in *that which is to come*; and hath put all things under his feet?" &c. (Eph. i. 20-23).

Is he not the true Joshua, putting his feet upon the necks of his enemies? (Josh. x. 24). Is he not the true David, who, having conquered and prevailed over the "Philistine," *stands upon him*, as he lies "fallen under" his feet? (1 Sam. xvii. 51; Ps. xviii. 38). "For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet," (1 Cor. xv. 25). Yes, it is under the "feet" of Jesus—those very feet once pierced with nails—that all things shall be put in subjection!

THE SON OF MAN SUFFERING DEATH IN MAN'S STEAD.

VER. 8, 9. "FOR IN THAT HE PUT ALL IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIM, HE LEFT NOTHING THAT IS NOT PUT UNDER HIM. BUT NOW

WE SEE NOT YET ALL THINGS PUT UNDER HIM. BUT WE SEE JESUS WHO WAS MADE A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS, FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH, CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR; THAT HE BY THE GRACE OF GOD SHOULD TASTE DEATH FOR" (OR, IN THE STEAD OF) "EVERY MAN."

"No cross, no crown." The Hebrews would have had a Messiah only to reign in pomp and glory. But God's way is, first, the suffering, then the glory. "Not yet" are all things put under the feet of Jesus. "Not yet" is the world to come given to him to reign over. "Ye are *not as yet* come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you," (Deut. xii. 9). The saints have ever been asking, "How long?" (Dan. xii. 6; Ps. xiii. 1, 2; Ps. lxxiv. 10, 11; Ps. xciv. 3, 4; Judges v. 28; Rev. vi. 10). But the answer still is "*Not yet*." For there is a "yet" in God's purpose, and we must tarry the Lord's leisure; as Charnock has beautifully remarked (on the words, "Saul, *yet* breathing out threatenings," &c., Acts ix. 1),—"this 'yet' of the Spirit is worthy of notice. It was not God's time *yet*, but it would be shortly."

So it is with "the world to come," *not yet* put in subjection under Jesus. It is still emphatically "to come." There was much to take place ere that kingdom could be established upon earth: much of suffering to *precede* the glory.

"We see Jesus . . . made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death . . . that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." This

is the wondrous lesson of this verse. The exceeding riches of God's "grace" are here displayed, giving Jesus to the death for us. It is not the extent of the atonement that is to be contemplated here, but rather that essential feature of it, *substitution*. It is Jesus tasting death *for*, or in the stead of, every man, just as on the Passover night the blood of the slain lamb was accepted in the stead of the life of Israel's first-born, or, as on the day of atonement, the scape-goat bore away the sins of the whole congregation, atonement having been made with the goat of the sin-offering. (Exod. xii. ; Lev. xvi.)

"He hath made him to be sin for us," (or, in our stead), (2 Cor. v. 21). "Who gave himself for us," (or, instead of us), (Titus ii. 14 ; Eph. v. 2, 25). It is ever upon Jesus that the Apostle would have us fix our eye. It is *himself* rather than his work that he dwells upon. Upon him the eye of God ever rested, and ours should do the same. "HE," by the grace of God, tasted death for us. Oh for a steady faith to gaze upon Jesus as our substitute ! "We see Jesus" crowned ; "we see Jesus" tasting death. It is not the act of dying so much as *the person who dies* that should occupy us. It is not the world put in subjection under him so much as *the Crowned One* who is set over it, on whom our eye should be riveted :—"but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."

"Take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest; and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold THE MAN whose name is the Branch *He shall bear the glory*, and shall sit and rule upon his throne," (Zech. vi. 11-13). He is "crowned with glory and honour." Oh, what perfection there is in the crown of Jesus! "On his head were many crowns," (Rev. xix. 12; Exod. xxxix. 30; Ps. xxi. 3; Sol. Song iii. 11).

Nor will he be alone in his glory. "In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of *glory*, and for a diadem of *beauty*, unto the residue of his people," (Isa. xxviii. 5). For "the glory which thou gavest me I have given them," were the words of Jesus, (John xvii. 22). He is their Forerunner in glory as well as in suffering. For "when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, *ye* shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," (1 Pet. v. 4).

How precious his "little while" of suffering has rendered him to all his "joint-heirs" no tongue can ever tell. They too have their "little while" of suffering, that they may know him and "the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." But while they look up and "see Jesus," who once suffered, but now is crowned with glory, they are strengthened to bear their "little while" of suffering, that they may be also "*glorified together!*" (Rom. viii. 17, 18; Phil. iii. 10).

When faith is weak and foes are strong, why do we not oftener look up and "see Jesus" crowned? "We see not yet all things put under him" in our own hearts; but by "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit," (2 Cor. iii. 18). Oh to be able every moment to say, "We see Jesus!" God forbid that we should live in so misty and hazy an atmosphere as seldom to see the sun. May he blot out every cloud, yea, every thick cloud of transgression which would hide "Jesus" from us! (Isa. xlv. 22; lix. 1, 2).

O believer, anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest "see Jesus." Get thee up into the "mountain of spices," far above the mists of earth, that thine eyes may "see the king in his beauty," (Isa. xxxiii. 17)—that thou mayest "see Jesus" *crowned*.

WHY JESUS AS THE SON OF MAN MUST SUFFER.

VER. 10. "FOR IT BECAME HIM, FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, IN BRINGING MANY SONS UNTO GLORY, TO MAKE THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS."

"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other," (Ps. lxxxv. 10). If Jesus "by *the grace* of God," tasted death for every man, it was because *justice* demanded the sinner's debt of the sinner's Surety.

"It *became* him" for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing "many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Mysterious indeed it may be; "for who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" &c. (Rom. xi. 33-36). But it is meet, and just, and right in God so to do. His grace designs to bring "many sons unto glory;" his justice demands that the Author of their salvation should taste death in their stead.

Jesus is here presented as our "Captain"—as "Captain of the host of the Lord," (Josh. v. 14). "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a *leader* and commander to the people," (Isa. lv. 4). This earth is the battle-field; and truly wondrous is the sight exhibited upon it before angels, and principalities, and powers. "The breaker is come up before them; they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it; and their king shall pass before them, and the Lord *on the head of them*," (Mic. ii. 13). "Behold, God himself is *with us* for our Captain," (2 Chron. xiii. 12). Jesus, "Emmanuel, God with us," is the Captain of our salvation; and it is no unreal or pretended conflict, but a *deep and dreadful endurance on the part of our Leader*, as all his followers can testify: "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual

wickedness in high places," (Eph. vi. 12). What could we do in such a warfare without a well-trained, yea, an omnipotent Leader? God knew our need, and provided for it. In leading his "many sons unto glory," he gave them a Leader whom he had *made "perfect"* through sufferings unto victory; one who upon the cross "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it," (Col. ii. 15).

And it will be when those "many sons," that "great multitude which no man can number," shall stand before the throne of God and of the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands, having come up out of great tribulation and fought the good fight of faith through hosts of spiritual foes—that then the glory will for ever banish the thought of the suffering, save as it adds a brighter lustre to the conqueror's crown. Then, every triumph gained over an easily besetting sin, every humble soldier in the Redeemer's camp, yea, the very *weakness* of the conquerors who triumph through the blood of the Lamb over "the *strong* man armed" with all his fallen hosts, will reflect with tenfold brilliancy the wisdom, the might, and the skill of "the Captain of their salvation." Then, indeed, we shall know that "we are more than conquerors *through him that loved us:*" or as the word truly implies in the original, "*far more exceeding* conquerors," (Rom. viii. 37). And great shall the noise of the shouting then be "by

reason of the *multitude* of men," — the "*many* sons," (Mic. ii. 12; Rev. vii. 9; comp. Deut. i. 10). Then shall the song be sung, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates: and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in"—even "the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord *mighty in battle*," (Ps. xxiv. 7, 8). Had Jesus never fought the fight, he had never been the triumphant Victor. But now the heavenly song will be "salvation (or *victory*) to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," (Rev. vii. 10).

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen," (Rom. xi. 33-36).

God condescending to justify his dealings in our eyes, seems to be the lesson taught us in this wondrous verse. It was meet or becoming in him to make the Captain of man's salvation perfect through sufferings. This the Hebrews stumbled at. "But if the justice of God required that so it should be, how could it be dispensed withal? Would they have God *unjust*?" (Owen). Jesus owned the rectitude;—"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And again, "Thus it is written, and thus *it behoved Christ to suffer*," (Luke xxiv. 26, 46). The end truly is worthy;—glory in its weight, and eternity, and multiplicity, (John xii. 24).

JESUS AS SON OF MAN, PARTAKER OF MAN'S NATURE.

VER. 11. "FOR BOTH HE THAT SANCTIFIETH AND THEY WHO ARE
SANCTIFIED ARE ALL OF ONE."

"As in an offering of the first-fruits of meat, a parcel of the *same nature* with the whole was taken and offered, whereby the whole was sanctified, (Lev. ii. 14); so the Lord Jesus being taken as the first-fruits of the nature of the children, the whole lump is separated unto God," (Owen). They are "all of one."

Identity of nature between the Saviour and the saved ones was, indeed, one of the first revelations of God concerning them. "The Lord God said unto the serpent, I will put enmity between thee and the *woman*, and between thy seed *and her seed*," (Gen. iii. 14, 15). What could the seed of the woman be, but one of like nature with herself?

And again and again the same truth was set forth in type. Within the most holy place were to be seen the cherubim, emblems of the redeemed ones, made out of the very matter of the mercy-seat. "Of the matter of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof," (Exod. xxv. 19, margin). Truly man is there seen "raised to an elevation glorious beyond description. He is placed upon the propitiatory, is *identified* with the seat of the Divine glory, which radiates about him in ceaseless and boundless floods of peace and joy; and he is *allied by real*

brotherhood with him who sits upon the throne," (Smith on the Doctrine of the Cherubims). They are "all of one."

In all his threefold offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, the brotherhood of Jesus with us is typified in the strongest terms, full of the deepest and most precious comfort. "Take thou unto thee Aaron *thy brother*, . . . that he may minister unto me in the *priest's* office," (Exod. xxviii. 1). "When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me. . . . Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose; *one from among thy brethren* shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not *thy brother*," (Deut. xvii. 14, 15).

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, *from the midst of thee, of thy brethren*, like unto me," (Deut. xviii. 15-18).

The Priest and the people, the King and his subjects, the Prophet and those who are taught, the Sanctifier "and they who are sanctified, are *all of one*." There is *no distance* between us and Jesus.

The Apostle now brings out this precious truth in three other remarkable quotations from the Old Testament.

VER. 11, 12. "BOTH HE THAT SANCTIFIETH AND THEY WHO ARE SANCTIFIED ARE ALL OF ONE: FOR WHICH CAUSE HE IS NOT ASHAMED TO CALL THEM BRETHREN, SAYING, I WILL DECLARE THY NAME UNTO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH WILL I SING PRAISE UNTO THEE."

1. JESUS IS OUR BROTHER.

This was the thought that filled his mind while hanging on the cross! (See Ps. xxii. 1-22). Even *there* he was "not ashamed" of us, for he is the brother born for adversity, (Prov. xvii. 17). "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." What precious words to be uttered at such a moment! What a soul-inspiring thought to have filled *his* heart, as he expired in agony upon the accursed tree! It was the song of praise that followed the midnight prayer. For do we not hear him in the supper chamber but a few hours before, praying aloud, and saying, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be *one*, as we are. And for their sakes I *sanctify* myself, that they also might be *sanctified* through the truth. And I have declared unto them *thy name, and will declare it,*" &c. (John xvii. 11, 19, 26). How beautifully the Psalm takes up the theme, where the Gospel leaves it, unfolding the very thoughts that still filled the mind of Jesus when no ear heard but God's! "I will declare thy name unto my

brethren : in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee," (Ps. xxii. 22).

"Most of the Psalm containeth the great conflict he had with his sufferings, and the displeasure of God against sin declared therein. But he is no sooner delivered from thence, than instantly he engageth in this work. As he lands upon the shore from that tempest wherein he was tossed in his passion, he cries out, 'I will declare thy name unto my brethren : in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.' Such was the cheerfulness and alacrity of the Spirit of Christ in this work, 'that he would do it as with joy and singing,' " (Owen). To tell his brethren about his Father, seemed enough to satisfy Jesus. For this he was content to come to earth, and wrap himself up, as it were, in a covering of humanity, that at his death the precious box of ointment containing the name of the Father might be broken, to pour forth its untold sweetness, (Sol. Song i. 3 ; John i. 18). And for this he will be our Teacher in eternity, in the great congregation, never wearying of the exhaustless theme. For the word "declare" signifies to number, to recount minutely, or to narrate every particular belonging to it. And when shall all that is in God be fully told ? or when shall all his praises be fully sung ? "in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." What an exquisite glimpse it affords of the joys of heaven—*Jesus leading the praises of his brethren !* He, having shared

their sorrows on earth, and they, joining in his praises in glory. "One family they dwell in him." It is their oneness of nature that forms the harmony of their songs of praise. "*My brethren.*"

NOTE.—The Hebrew word in Ps. xxii. 22, signifies "A brother; one connected with us by partaking of the same nature," &c. (Parkhurst). What an argument to convince the Hebrews that their Messiah was truly "*the Son of Man!*"

VER. 13. "AND AGAIN, I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM."

2. JESUS TRUSTING.

The Apostle next quotes from the 18th Psalm, "I will put my *trust* in him." The word signifies "to shelter, or betake one's self to the care and protection of another." What a picture of human dependence upon God! as if Jesus felt his helplessness as man, driving him to shelter himself in God. And perhaps no lesson is more deeply impressed upon us than this, by all he said of himself while on earth. The Gospel of John is full of it. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do," (John v. 19). "I can of mine own self do nothing," (John v. 30). "I do nothing of myself," &c. (John viii. 28; xii. 49; xiv. 10). The words he spake, the works he did, all were in his Father's name and his Father's strength.

"He was exposed in the days of his flesh to great difficulties, anxiety of mind, dangers, and troubles. And they were all typified out by the great sufferings

of David before he came to his kingdom," (Owen). When David "was greatly distressed" at Ziklag, he "encouraged himself in the Lord his God," (1 Sam. xxx. 6). When the Philistines took him in Gath, he said, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee," &c. (Ps. lvi. 3, 4). When he fled from Saul in the cave, he wrote, "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: *for my soul trusteth in thee*: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast," (Ps. lvii. 1, with the title). And in the words of the song that he spake unto the Lord, in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul, he said, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower," (Ps. xviii. 1, 2 and the title). It is David, and the greater than David, declaring his trust in the sevenfold perfections of Jehovah; teaching us that if we would *trust* in God as Jesus did, we must seek to *know* him as Jesus knew him, in all the specific and varied features of his character. This will enable us, when we come to die, to take *his* words into our mouths and say, "Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit," adding, "I trust in the Lord," (Luke xxiii. 46; Ps. xxxi. 5, 6, 13, 14). Let us learn from all this how full the Psalms are of Jesus; and let us often

think of the lesson taught us from them in this verse,—*Jesus trusting*. For it was Jesus who said, “I will put *my* trust in him.”

VER. 13. “AND AGAIN, BEHOLD I AND THE CHILDREN WHICH GOD HATH GIVEN ME.”

3. JESUS OWNING US AS CHILDREN.

If oneness of nature were implied in our having one common Father with Jesus, it is certainly not less so in our being called *his children*. For the word used by the prophet Isaiah, whom the Apostle quotes, literally means “to beget or bear,” necessarily supposing that the offspring begotten is of the same nature with the parent that begets, (Isa. viii. 18). To the Hebrews, therefore, these three quotations must have come home with convincing power. “He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are all of one*.” And Jesus is “not ashamed to own his connexion with us.”

In heaven he is ever presenting us to the Father, saying, Behold I and the children thou hast given me. Behold me—behold them.

“He shall see his seed” was the promise of the Father, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied,” (Isa. liii. 10, 11). And in every one that is “born of the Spirit,” like Nicodemus of old, the promise of the Father is realised. What an encouraging thought for the ministers of Christ, that

whosoever "through their word," the Holy Ghost is gathering souls to Christ, God is *giving children to Jesus!* The day that Peter preached in Jerusalem, three thousand children were added to his family, the gift of God the Father, through the agency of the new birth of the Spirit, (John xvii. 9-24; Acts ii. 1-41). And how precious is the security of these given children; chastened they may be, yea, scourged, when they forsake the way of God's commandments; but there is the "nevertheless" of the everlasting covenant, that they shall never be rejected. "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. *His seed shall endure for ever,*" (Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4, 29-36). The Father's gift, the Son's possession, who can estimate the bliss of the children of Jesus! Oh that we may walk worthy of the confidence he reposes in us when he says, "Surely they are my people, *children that will not lie,*" (Isa. lxiii. 8, 9). And may we share the joy of Jesus, when looking down from the upper sanctuary, he sees with joy his people gathered round his table, from time to time, in the earthly sanctuary, and realises the fulfilment of his Father's promise,—*"Thy children like olive-plants round about thy table,"* (Ps. cxxviii. 3).

JESUS AS SON OF MAN, OUR KINSMAN REDEEMER.

VER. 14, 15. "FORASMUCH THEN AS THE CHILDREN ARE PARTAKERS OF FLESH AND BLOOD, HE ALSO HIMSELF LIKEWISE TOOK PART

OF THE SAME; THAT THROUGH DEATH HE MIGHT DESTROY HIM THAT HAD THE POWER OF DEATH, THAT IS, THE DEVIL: AND DELIVER THEM WHO THROUGH FEAR OF DEATH WERE ALL THEIR LIFETIME SUBJECT TO BONDAGE."

This is imagery that would be familiar to every Hebrew. To deliver a captive brother, or to avenge the blood of a murdered brother, was the right of the *Goel*, or nearest of kin, and could be done by none besides, (Lev. xxv. 25, &c.) Jesus, therefore, to be our Redeemer, must be our kinsman; indeed, the kinsman and redeemer were one. The *Goel* was at once the kinsman, the redeemer, and the avenger of blood.* What a type of Jesus!

When God cursed the serpent in Eden, he said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head," (Gen. iii. 15). A sentence was plainly told the serpent "that man's kinsman, the woman's seed, would avenge on him the wrongs done by him upon the family." Jesus became the woman's seed, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." "The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him he shall slay him." "The murderer shall surely be put to death," (Num. xxxv. 16-21). When Jesus came on earth, he met *the* murderer, "he who was a murderer from the beginning,"

* The word is the same in the original, though translated kinsman, redeemer, and avenger.

(John viii. 44), even "the devil;" he met him and avenged our blood upon him. He destroyed him that had the power of death, by dying himself and rising again.

The deep and wondrous lesson of these verses, therefore, is that of Resurrection, or life out of death. Of "the *suffering* of death" on the part of Jesus, St Paul had already spoken in verse 9, and who can estimate the intensity of meaning in those four words? Well might Chalmers say, "It was not the parade of an unreal suffering he had to encounter, but a deep and dreadful endurance—a death equivalent in the amount of its soreness to the devouring fire and everlasting burnings which, but for him, believers must have borne!" But it is now of his *triumph over death* that the Apostle is speaking. It is Jesus rescuing his children from the grasp of Abaddon, the destroyer, (Rev. ix. 11, marg.) It is Jesus passing through "the gates of death," that he may cut their bars in sunder, and entering the grave that he may be its destruction; as it is written, "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction," (Hos. xiii. 14; Ps. cvii. 10-16; Ps. ix. 13, 14). It is Jesus proclaiming "liberty to the captives, and *the opening of the prison* to them that are *bound*," (Isa. lxi. 1). It is Jesus ransoming them "from the power of the grave," and redeeming them "from death," (Hos. xiii. 14.) For it is written again, "He will swallow up death in victory,"

(Isa. xxv. 8). "Thou hast ascended up on high, thou hast *led captivity captive*," (Ps. lxviii. 18).

Oh, what "glorious liberty" is this for the children of Jesus, who all their lifetime were in bondage through fear of death! "When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers."

Some have thought that the bondage-state here spoken of refers *only* to the saints of the Old Testament. Assuredly they had *more* of it than we have; for they knew the redemption-work of Jesus *only* by faith, while we have seen much of it accomplished. Much, however, still remains to be brought to pass at his second coming; and not until the redemption be consummated will the redeemed ones be perfectly set free. Not till Jesus comes again will death, the last enemy, be destroyed, (1 Cor. xv. 26). Not till Jesus comes again will Satan be bound or cast into the lake of fire, (Rev. xx.) Not until Jesus comes again, therefore, are we *so* delivered from him, as to be entirely free from fear or bondage. And yet in proportion as faith grasps the person of the Redeemer and the fulness of his redemption-work, this "fear of death" will vanish away. Faith sees it already a conquered foe. So strong was the faith of this very Apostle in writing to the Corinthians on this very subject, that he exclaims, "O death! where is thy sting?" addressing it "*as lying dead before him*," (Horsley).

Yet even then, the Apostle was contemplating it in connexion with the second coming of Christ, the sounding of the Archangel's trumpet, and the resurrection of the dead. For he says immediately before, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, *then* shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory," (1 Cor. xv. 51-55).

We cannot rightly understand the force of the Apostle's words, without grasping the whole period between the first and second advents of the Lord Jesus, for he was evidently contemplating redemption-work in its full extent. And though we have already received "the *spirit* of adoption," we are "*waiting for the adoption*, to wit, *the redemption of our body*," (Rom. viii. 15, 23). The devil still has power over our bodies of clay, to turn them into loathsome masses of corruption. So that, if we can say with David, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," it is, as has been beautifully remarked, not because there is nothing to fear, but because "Thou art with me," (Ps. xxiii. 4). To realise the felt presence of the Redeemer, of One so dear *as the nearest of kin* can be to us, gives such holy confidence as bids fear away. Oh to know more of Jesus as our *Goel*! How full of holy boldness Ruth became when she learned from Naomi that Boaz was her kinsman: "Naomi said unto her, the man is near of kin unto us,

one of our next kinsmen," (Ruth ii. 20). And what confidence Naomi reposed in him in this same character: "Sit still, my daughter (she said), until thou know how the matter will fall: *for the man will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day*," (Ruth iii. 18). Jesus became our kinsman, that he might deliver us from the fear of death, by destroying him that had the power of death. Nor will he be at rest till he have "finished the thing;" till "the enemy and the avenger" is stilled (Ps. viii. 2)—till every child in his family, "bound hand and foot with grave-clothes," like Lazarus of old, has heard the commanding word,—*"Come forth!"* and has been for ever delivered from death's dominion. Let us often pause to think of Jesus as he stood beside the cave where Lazarus was buried, to see him *weeping* as our brother, our nearest of kin, yet giving there a marvellous display of his redeeming work, in rescuing from Satan the victim he had carried through the gates of death into the silent grave! "Jesus saith unto them, *Loose him*," (John xi. 35-44).

There may be weeping still in the family of Jesus, for death still enters there; but "the *sting* of death" is gone, the gates of death are broken, and its bars are snapped in sunder. And even now we may sing, "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped," (Ps. cxxiv. 7).

VER. 16. "FOR VERILY HE TOOK NOT ON HIM THE NATURE OF ANGELS; BUT HE TOOK ON HIM THE SEED OF ABRAHAM"

This "for" connects this verse with what has gone before. Jesus took part of the children's "flesh and blood," that he might deliver them *as their Redeemer*. And verily it was "the children" he would redeem, *and not angels*. "For verily he taketh not hold of angels, *but of the seed of Abraham* he taketh hold," (margin). Had he redeemed angels when they fell, he must have taken *their* nature, and become *their* God, for the right of redemption belonged only to the nearest of kin.

"But of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold."—"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, *which is Christ*," (Gal. iii. 16). How little had the Hebrews understood the promise made to their father! When Jesus was among them on the earth, the very embodiment of the promise manifestly set forth before them, they said to him in the strangest way, "WE be Abraham's seed," (John viii. 33). They knew not, indeed, that Abraham's seed was Christ. Had they known it, they would have rejoiced in a Messiah who could be their Redeemer, because he was as they were. "the seed of Abraham," (Rom. ix. 5).

There is specific comfort and instruction stored up for us, in knowing Jesus as Abraham's seed. He was the seed of the *woman* (Gen. iii. 15), the *bruised* one,

who by his sufferings made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

And he is the seed of *David* (Ps. lxxxix.), the *king* who shall sit upon David's throne, (Luke i. 31-33). But it is through Jesus as the seed of *Abraham* that "the *blessing* of Abraham" becomes ours, that we become "heirs according to the promise," and that "righteousness without works" is imputed unto us, (Gal. iii. 13, 14, 29; with Rom. iv. 3, &c.) "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed," so essential is the oneness between these two things. But never till all the nations of the earth are blessed in him, who is "heir of *the world*," shall we fully comprehend what the redeeming work of Jesus was in taking hold of the seed of Abraham! (Rom. iv. 13). Let faith ponder it day by day.

Now let us join with hearts and tongues,
To emulate the angels' songs;
Yea, sinners may address their King,
In songs that angels cannot sing.

They praise the Lamb who once was slain,
But *we* can add a higher strain:
Not only say, He suffer'd thus,
But that He suffer'd all *for us*!

Jesus who pass'd the angels by,
Assumed our flesh to bleed and die;
And still He makes it His abode;
As man He fills the throne of God. (NEWTON.)

JESUS AS SON OF MAN, OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

VER. 17, 18. "WHEREFORE IN ALL THINGS IT BEHOVED HIM TO BE MADE LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN, THAT HE MIGHT BE A MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST IN THINGS PERTAINING TO GOD, TO MAKE RECONCILIATION FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE: FOR IN THAT HE HATH SUFFERED BEING TEMPTED, HE IS ABLE TO SUCCOUR THEM THAT ARE TEMPTED."

Now, the Apostle has reached the climax—he has set forth Jesus as the Son of *God*, and Jesus as the Son of *Man*, to the very end that he might shew how divinely adapted he is under this twofold character to become his people's "high priest."

For the priestly office was that emphatically which had to do with God on the one hand, and with the people on the other; and which, to be *perfectly* fulfilled, must meet *all God's requirements* on one side, and *all man's need* on the other. Jesus could do this, because, as the Son of God, he *was* God, and came short in nothing; whilst, as Son of Man, he was able to suffer, and die, and be tempted, and exercised as we are, *meeting us in our place of need*, both to atone for our sins and to succour us in our afflictions. And our value of such an high priest will be exactly in proportion as we feel pained by a sense of distance from our God, through conscious guilt. For thus and thus only can we be reconciled and brought nigh.

"Take thou *unto thee* Aaron THY BROTHER that he may minister *unto me* in the priest's office."

(Exod. xxviii. 1, 2, 4, 41). How closely Moses must have felt himself drawn to God, when his own brother Aaron was his high priest!—and *Jesus is ours!* How beautiful the type, and how precious the antitype!

“A merciful and faithful high priest.” In Jesus “mercy and truth are met together,” (Ps. lxxxv. 10). And David, in knowing him, could say, “I will sing of the *mercies* of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy *faithfulness* to all generations. For I have said, *Mercy* shall be built up for ever: thy *faithfulness* shalt thou establish in the very heavens.” (Ps. lxxxix. 1, 2). “Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious; long-suffering, and plenteous in *mercy* and *truth*,” (Ps. lxxxvi. 15). “Who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy *faithfulness* round about thee?” (Ps. lxxxix. 8).

“God *be merciful* to me a sinner!” (Luke xviii. 13).

I've nothing, Lord, wherein to trust.
To thee I come a sinner lost:
Mercy alone I make my plea,
“O God, be merciful to me!”

“This mercifulness of Christ is the gracious condolence and compassion of his whole soul with his people in all their temptations, sufferings, dangers, fears, and sorrows, . . . excited and provoked as to its continual exercise in his office of high priest,” (Owen).

Had Jesus been a stern, severe, or heartless priest, who would have ventured near him? But oh! the

depth of his tenderness, compassion, and sympathy, who can tell? The very word "merciful" implies "one who is tenderly compassionate, laying all the miseries of his people *to heart*." "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." We have no such friend on earth as this; none but Jesus can understand and enter into all the trials of the inner man. What is a burden or an arrow to one human soul, scarcely touches the heart of another; but—"All, all, is known to *thee*."

And he is a *faithful* high priest, *i. e.*, "exact, constant, and careful in his consideration of the wants and sorrows of his suffering brethren." We cannot weary him with the minuteness of our oft-told tale of woe. He is *never* unfaithful in forgiving our sins, but always "faithful and just," though we confess them seventy times seven times in a day! (1 John i. 9; Matt. xviii. 22, &c.) And it is *in trying him*, and always finding him the same, that we learn how merciful and faithful he is, and how "*able to succour*" us!

Owen speaks beautifully of this ability in Jesus. It is not a natural power, nor a power of the hand, "but a gracious ready enlargedness of *heart*. For he knows the weakness and misery of human nature—he *tried it, felt it, and will never forget it*. But he knows what will afford us relief. In his throne of eternal peace and glory he sees his poor brethren labouring in that storm which he passed through with so much soul-travail,

and this excites and moves him to relieve us." Again, "He hath a sufficiency of care, wisdom, and faithfulness *to observe and know the seasons* wherein succour is necessary to us: a sufficiency of mercy, tenderness, and compassion *to excite him thereunto*; a sufficiency of power to afford succour that shall be *effectual*; a sufficiency of acceptance at the throne of *grace to prevail with God* for suitable supplies and succour——He is every way 'able to succour' the tempted ones. To him be praise and glory evermore!"

It is an ability arising out of knowledge gained *by experience*: "for in that *he himself hath suffered* being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

This truth is powerfully brought out in the book of Job, by the inability of his friends to comfort him, through their utter want of understanding of his sufferings. Oh, there is a depth of comfort unutterable in the sympathy of real fellow-feeling—"Knowing that *the same afflictions* are accomplished in your brethren," (1 Pet. v. 9). "Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body," (Heb. xiii. 3). "Thou shalt not oppress a stranger: *for ye know the heart of a stranger*, seeing *ye* were strangers in the land of Egypt," (Exod. xxiii. 9). If this be true in poor imperfect men, how much more in Jesus, whose sympathy can be so perfect! "In all their affliction, he was afflicted," (Isa. lxiii. 9).



CHAPTER III.

CHRIST THE GREATER THAN MOSES.

"THE HEAVENLY CALLING."

CHAP. III. VER. 1. "WHEREFORE, HOLY BRETHREN, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING, CONSIDER THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST OF OUR PROFESSION, CHRIST JESUS."

OH for "the spirit of wisdom and revelation" in the knowledge of Jesus, that we "may know *what* is the hope of his calling," (Eph. i. 17, 18), even that "*high calling of God in Christ Jesus*," which this Apostle so reached forth unto. (Phil. iii. 13, 14.) "The heavenly calling,"—the "holy calling" (2 Tim. i. 9, 10), "the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness," yet unto such heights as no man can declare, for it is a "calling" unto fellowship and union with "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity!" (Eph. iv. 1, 2; Isa. lvii. 15). "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us"—*this* is the high and "heavenly calling," wherewith we are called, (John xvii. 21), unto "eternal glory," (1 Pet. v. 10), yea, "unto his *kingdom* and glory!" (1 Thess. ii. 12). And all in "Christ Jesus," for he is the Alpha and Omega of our profession. To lead the Hebrews into the heights of this "*heavenly calling*" was one

grand object of the Apostle in this Epistle : to shew them Christ as the High Priest "passed into the heavens," to unfold to them that new and living way through the veil of his flesh "into the holiest," by the which we may draw near unto God, and to set Christ before them as entered, not "into the holy places made with hands, which are the *figures* of the true, *but into heaven itself*, now to appear in the presence of God for us"—these were the high and holy themes which he delighted in himself, and sought to arouse his brethren to the participation of with him. Was there ever a "profession" so dignified, so exalted? a "calling" so high and so heavenly? Strange that so few hours in the day should be commonly spent by us in the blessed occupation of considering Him who is the Apostle and High Priest of it! "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth *not consider!*" (Isa. i. 3). The Lord give to his people greater longings of heart after "the knowledge of *him*," and after "the hope of *his calling!*"

It was like St Paul, in writing to the Hebrews to consider Jesus under the twofold character of "Apostle and High Priest;" for it set him forth as the antitype at once of Moses and of Aaron, as if he had said, Look back upon all that is written of *them*, and consider *him*.

Oh, if less were spoken in these days of apostolic doctrine and apostolic succession, and more of Jesus

"*the Apostle*" of our profession, how many would be clinging to him who now are falling away! Lord, teach us to "consider" thee!

THE SERVANT AND THE SON.

VER. 2-6. "WHO WAS FAITHFUL TO HIM THAT APPOINTED HIM, AS ALSO MOSES WAS FAITHFUL IN ALL HIS HOUSE. FOR THIS MAN WAS COUNTED WORTHY OF MORE GLORY THAN MOSES, INASMUCH AS HE WHO HATH BUILDED THE HOUSE HATH MORE HONOUR THAN THE HOUSE. FOR EVERY HOUSE IS BUILDED BY SOME MAN; BUT HE THAT BUILT ALL THINGS IS GOD. AND MOSES VERILY WAS FAITHFUL IN ALL HIS HOUSE, AS A SERVANT, FOR A TESTIMONY OF THOSE THINGS WHICH WERE TO BE SPOKEN AFTER; BUT CHRIST AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE; WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE, IF WE HOLD FAST THE CONFIDENCE AND THE REJOICING OF THE HOPE FIRM UNTO THE END."

Jesus is to be contemplated here in his likeness to, yet his superiority over, *Moses*. He was like Moses, as *the Sent One* of the Father,—“The Lord God and his Spirit hath *sent* me,” (Isa. xlviii. 16). “He hath *sent me* to bind up the broken hearted,” &c. (Isa. lxi. 1-3.) “I am from him, and he hath *sent* me,” (John vii. 29). “I proceeded and came forth from God; neither came I of myself, but *he sent* me,” (John viii. 42; xvii. 3, 8, 18, 25, &c.) He ever thought and spake of himself as “the Apostle,” or the Sent One of the Father; the Gospel of John especially is full of this truth. And one that was so prominently before him *should be* very dear and very constantly present to our minds. It is

exceedingly blessed to *know* him as "the Apostle" of our profession, and our confidence in him as our leader through the wilderness will depend very much upon it.

When God called Moses that he might *send him* to bring forth his people out of Egypt, Moses immediately inquired, "When I come unto the children of Israel, I shall say unto them, The God of your fathers *hath sent me* unto you ; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" knowing well that everything would depend on the degree of confidence they placed in the authority with which he was charged. "And God said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I AM *hath sent me* unto you. And God said, moreover, unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, *hath sent me unto you*," (Exod. iii. 10-15 ; Acts vii. 34, 35).

Thus was Moses the type of Jesus : the one sent to rescue an earthly people from earthly bondage to an earthly inheritance ; the other sent to rescue a spiritual people from spiritual captivity to a *heavenly* inheritance, as "partakers of *the heavenly calling* !"

There was another point of resemblance between Moses and Jesus :—"Who was faithful to him that appointed him, *as also* Moses was faithful in all his house." The Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and said, "Hear now my words : If there be a

prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. *My servant Moses is not so*, who is faithful in all mine house. *With him* will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold," (Num. xii. 6-8). None was like Moses in this: "in all mine house *faithful* is he!" It is a beautiful word in the Hebrew, אֱמֻנָה like our *Amen*; and it constitutes him a beautiful figure of Jesus, "*the Amen*, the *faithful* and true witness," (Rev. iii. 14).

Never once did Moses waver in his choice after he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," from the day that he forsook Egypt, to the day that he ascended the hill of Pisgah to view the promised land, (Deut. xxxiv. 1-12). Never once did he conceal the message which God put into his mouth; never once do we read of his adding to, or taking from it. Again and again, (even upwards of fifty times), has the Spirit of God deemed it worthy of record on the sacred page, that "as the Lord commanded Moses," *so did he!* It was worthy of record, *because* it prefigured *Jesus*. And how beautifully it is written of the type, (Exod. xl. 33, 34), "So Moses *finished* the work . . . and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle;" whilst of the Anti-type it is recorded that in his last prayer he said, "I have glorified thee on the earth; *I have finished* the work which thou gavest *me* to do. And now, O Father,

glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," (John xvii. 4, 5). This was faithfulness indeed to him that appointed him :

But Jesus had the pre-eminence over Moses even in his faithfulness. For Moses failed *once*, (Num. xx. 12), "Ye *believed* me not," literally ye were *not* faithful, for it is the same word as in chapter xii. 7, *but Jesus never*. "I do *always* those things that please him," (John viii. 29 ; xvii. 4 ; xiv. 31 ; xii. 50 ; iv. 34). In Jesus there were *no* unevennesses, *no* unfaithfulnesses. He was always the Father's *faithful* "*Apostle*." And his superiority over Moses is still more evident. "For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house," &c. (ver. 3-6). It is a beautiful illustration. "The house of Israel" was the familiar title by which the people of Israel were constantly recognised. The nations of the world he ruled over, but his *house*, his *dwelling-place*, was with Israel his chosen.

And now that Israel is for a season cast off, he has another house or dwelling-place, even his church, "a *spiritual* house," (1 Pet. ii. 5) ; "the household of faith," (Gal. vi. 10) ; composed of "lively stones," both from Jews and Gentiles ; as St Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, *and of the household of God* . . . builded together *for an habitation of God* through the Spirit," (Eph. ii. 19-22).

What then is the house to the framer thereof? what is the building to the builder? what is the clay to the potter? what the thing formed, compared with him who formed it?

Moses was an Israelite, and a member of the house of Israel. He did not form the house, he was but a part of it. Nay, he was "*a servant*" in the house. But Jesus is the *Son over* the house! (ver. 5, 6). What a climax of honour is secured to *Him*! Great was the privilege of Moses to be "the Lord's servant," and to be owned, as he was of God by those two precious words, "My servant," (See Josh. i. 1, 2, 7, 13, 15, &c. &c.) But still, he was "faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after." All he did, and all he was, were valuable in so far as they were a foreshadowing of better things to come. "But Christ as a Son over his own house:" *here* is the substance and reality of which that was but the figure. That was the earthly, this is the heavenly. That was the temporal, this is the spiritual and eternal. How wondrous the privilege of being the "house" or dwelling-place of Jesus! "Whose house are *we*, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." "*I in them*!" "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them," (2 Cor. vi. 16).

The privilege seems so unutterably great, that one

almost wonders at the needs-be for the exhortation to hold it fast. Yet how many let it go! and who that knows anything of their own hearts, does not know how easily "hope" languishes when the object of hope is lost sight of, or how soon their "confidence" is lost by the indulgence of some secret sin? There is much of opposition, and we need much grace to keep a firm, unwavering hold of our hope and joy in Christ. Oh to be "rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith," "grounded and settled," like the well-fastened sockets and boards of the tabernacle of old, none of which were ever missing, none falling away, but all standing compact together; (Exod. xl. 18; xxvi. 15, 24); a beautiful figure of the household of Jesus, (Eph. iv. 14-16; Col. ii. 7; and i. 23).

"THE PROVOCATION."

VER. 7, 8, 9. "WHEREFORE (AS THE HOLY GHOST SAITH, TO-DAY, IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS, AS IN THE PROVOCATION, IN THE DAY OF TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS: WHEN YOUR FATHERS TEMPTED ME, PROVED ME, AND SAW MY WORKS FORTY YEARS."

Deeply instructive is that emphatic name given by the Spirit of truth, to the forty years' wilderness-wanderings under Moses. He calls it "*the provocation*." It was one long series of unbroken provocations. For thus spake Moses unto Israel on the borders of Canaan, "Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the

Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord," &c. (Deut. ix. 7, 8).

"The provocation" is an expression that seems to bring their whole wilderness-history at once under review; how they were miraculously supplied with bread from heaven, and with water from the rock, (Exod. xvi., xvii.); guided by the pillar of cloud and of fire, (Exod. xiii. 21, 22); their feet never suffered to swell, and their raiment never waxing old, (Deut. viii. 4), &c. &c. So that it could with truth be said to them, "These forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee, thou hast *lacked nothing*," (Deut. ii. 7).

And yet, though they had such full experience of what God could and would do for them day by day for the space of forty years, "they soon forgot his works." They "lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert." "Yea, they spake against God: they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" "And they sinned *yet more* against him, by provoking the Most High in the wilderness," (Ps. cvi. 13, 14; Ps. lxxviii. 16-20). Yea, they "wrought *great* provocations," (Neh. ix. 18). Insomuch that the Psalmist exclaimed, "*How oft* did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert? Yea, they turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel," (Ps. lxxviii. 40, 41). It was a time that was

most truly described by those two words, "*the provocation.*"

And oh, how fearfully true the picture is of the spiritual Israel, their own hearts alone can tell! Often are they made to feel as if from the beginning to the ending of their wilderness-journeyings, they have but one series of provocations to look back upon. Each fresh stage seems but to call forth fresh murmurings on their part, and to give fresh cause of provocation on God's part. And there is a painfulness, a bitterness in this to the advancing believer, which lays him only lower in the depths of humiliation before his God, with every step that he advances, yea, and it is before *that* God, who "being *full* of compassion," has "*many a time*" turned his anger away, and forgiven his iniquity, (Ps. lxxxviii. 38).

Deeply, deeply humbling are these wilderness lessons. But the child of God *is humbled* under them. This, indeed, is the wide and essential difference between the true believer and the mere professor. The one is humbled, the other is hardened. The faithful Moses, under all those forty years' provocations, was only drawn afresh to his knees. When the people murmured, saying, What shall we drink? "he cried unto the Lord," (Exod. xv. 24, 25). When they had provoked the Lord to anger by making the golden calf, "Moses besought the Lord his God," (Exod. xxxii. 1-11). It was always so. Each fresh provocation

became to him a fresh errand to the throne of grace. But the unbelieving people hardened their hearts under them. For so it is written (Neh. ix. 16, 17), "But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and *hardened* their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, and refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage." It is a terrible word: it signifies to be obstinate, perverse, and intractable. What a picture of the sinner's heart of stone! and how fearful the *end* of such a course,—“he that being often reprovèd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy,” (Prov. xxix. 1).

The threatening was verified in the case of Israel.

VER. 10, 11. “WHEREFORE I WAS GRIEVED WITH THAT GENERATION, AND SAID, THEY DO ALWAY ERR IN THEIR HEART; AND THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN MY WAYS. SO I SWARE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER INTO MY REST.”

It was a *grieving* as well as a provoking time. It calls to remembrance the days before the flood, when “it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it *grieved him* at his heart,” (Gen. vi. 6). Is it not precisely what Christians are warned against? “*Grieve not* the Holy Spirit of God,” (Eph. iv. 30). For it is “the Holy Ghost” who says, “Wherefore *I* was grieved with that generation,” (Ver. 7-10). Oh! how heart-

rending to the tender-hearted child of God, is the thought of *grieving* his "*Comforter*."

The original word in Ps. xcvi. 10, implies more than grief; it is loathing, or rejecting with disgust (as in Ezek. xx, 43, "Ye shall *loathe* yourselves in your own sight," &c.). There is something tremendous in this rejection of the loathsome sinner by the Holy Ghost—in the very thought of the Holy Ghost swearing in *his* wrath! It shuts up the sinner indeed to the wrath of a triune God. For we read in Rom. i. 18, that "the wrath of *God* is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." In Rev. vi. 16, 17, there is "the wrath of *the Lamb*! for the great day of *his* wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" And here, "the Holy Ghost saith—So I swear in *my* wrath!" Poor, reckless sinner, wilt thou go on provoking and rejecting God, till thou provokest him to reject thee? "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?" (Rom. ii. 4, 5). "The day of wrath" will surely come. "Oh, turn ye, turn ye. For why *will* ye die?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11).

The record of the solemn story of Israel's rejection is in Num. xiv. 11, &c. "The Lord said unto Moses, *How long will this people provoke me?* and how long

will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they.

“And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them,) and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou, Lord, art among this people; that thou, Lord, art seen face to face; and that thy cloud standeth over them; and that thou goest before them, by day-time in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now, if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations, which have heard the fame of thee, will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. . . . Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt, even until now.

“And the Lord said, I have pardoned, according to thy word: but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. *Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it,*” (ver. 11–23).

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein," (ver. 26-30). "I the Lord have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, *and there they shall die*," (ver. 35).

"They filled that desert with sins and graves," (Owen). Yet that dreary, "waste-howling wilderness," strewn with the carcases of that vast multitude of men, sad and dreary as it was, was still but a faint picture of the death which reigns around *us* on every side in this fallen world, because of sin. And oh! what will that world be, where Abaddon, the Destroyer, shall have unlimited sway over the ever-dying souls and bodies of the lost—that world of *unrest*, to which those are hopelessly driven to whom Jehovah swears, "They shall not enter into my rest."

That day of "provocation," what solemn thoughts it awakens! Owen says of it, "It seems not to be any

one particular sin that is intended, but the whole carriage of the people in their whole course. The expression compriseth all the sinful actions of that people against God, under the ministry of Moses."

Compare Ps. lxxviii., Ps. cvi., Neh. ix., Deut. ix. 8, 22-24. "In Horeb ye provoked the Lord." "And at Taberah, and at Massah, at Kibroth-hattaavah, ye provoked the Lord. Likewise, when the Lord sent you from Kadesh-barnea, &c. Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you."

Such is the picture drawn by God's own hand of "the day of temptation in the wilderness."

THE WARNING.

VER. 12-15. "TAKE HEED, BRETHREN, LEST THERE BE IN ANY OF YOU AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF, IN DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD. BUT EXHORT ONE ANOTHER DAILY, WHILE IT IS CALLED TO-DAY; LEST ANY OF YOU BE HARDENED THROUGH THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN. FOR WE ARE MADE PARTAKERS OF CHRIST, IF WE HOLD THE BEGINNING OF OUR CONFIDENCE STEDFAST UNTO THE END: WHILE IT IS SAID, TO-DAY, IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS, AS IN THE PROVOCATION."

The preceding verses, quoted by the Apostle from the 95th Psalm, are introduced as in a parenthesis (ver. 7-11), read without which, his argument in its true, naked simplicity would stand thus:—"Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

but Christ as a Son over his own house: whose house we are, *if* we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. *Wherefore take heed*, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God," (Ver. 5, 6, 7, 12). The quotation from the 95th Psalm comes in by way of confirmation and illustration. And now he turns to it *again*, dwelling on the emphatic word, "*To-day*," shewing that present watchfulness is the surest safeguard against future apostasy—"while it is said, *To-day*."

"To-day" is God's word; "to-morrow" is Satan's word, for in the night that intervenes he blinds "the minds of them which believe not," and they are "lost," (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4). "Now is the accepted time, *now* is *the day* of salvation," (2 Cor. vi. 2). The true child of God will find in his own heart a ready response to all the Apostle says. For he well knows that it is by a present abiding in the truth that we "assure our hearts" before our God. As St John says, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God," (1 John iii. 19-21). "Whoso *keepeth his word*, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him," (1 John ii. 5). This keeping of the word is what is meant by "To-day, if ye will hear his voice." For the expression in the original implies such a hearing as is accompanied by an effectual *doing*. "It shall come to pass, if thou shalt

hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe *and to do* all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God," (Deut. xxviii. 1, 2). "The Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers; if thou shalt *hearken* unto the *voice* of the Lord thy God, *to keep* his commandments and his statutes," &c. (Deut. xxx. 1-10). Oh for a "hearing ear" and an obedient and willing "heart," such as Jesus had when he said, "Mine *ears* hast thou opened. I delight *to do* thy will, O my God," (Ps. xl. 6-8).

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; while it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day," (ver. 14, 15, and 13).

Thus Moses commanded Israel, "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt *teach* them (margin, "whet or sharpen") diligently unto thy children, and shalt *talk of them* when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up," &c. (Deut. vi. 6-8). "It is a good thing," exclaimed the Psalmist, "to shew forth thy loving-kindness *in the morning*, and thy faithfulness *every night*,"

(Ps. xcii. 1, 2). "Every joint that receives the influences of life from Christ the head, is to work effectually, and to give out the supplies it receives, unto the preservation, and increase, and edification of the whole," (Owen). (Eph. iv. 16; Heb. x. 24, 25.) Were we more faithful to one another in this duty of mutual daily exhortation, we should much less often see the hardening process going on around and within, which is so common, alas! "through the deceitfulness of sin."

When "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light," what amazing peril we are in every hour! (2 Cor. xi. 14). Well might the Apostle say to the Corinthians, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy:" for "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent *beguiled* Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ," (2 Cor. xi. 2, 3). Sin is ever a serpent-like thing, in all its varying forms: "her ways are *moveable*, that thou canst not know them," (Prov. v. 6). And do we not read of "deceitful lusts" (Eph. iv. 22)? of "the deceitfulness of riches" (Matt. xiii. 22)? of many being "turned aside like a deceitful bow" (Ps. lxxviii. 57)? and of him whose working is "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 9-12)?—the serpent in Genesis, and the serpent still in Revelation, deceiving "the whole world!" Oh what need we have to pray, "Keep me from *the snares* which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity," (Ps.

cxli. 9 ; xxxv. 7). What need for watchfulness over the inner man !

The warning is, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil *heart* of unbelief." It was not for any single *act* of transgression that Israel was excluded from God's rest ; it is neither this sin nor that he charges them with, but *the erring heart* which led to all. "They do alway err in their heart." It was "a generation that set not their *heart* aright, and whose *spirit* was not stedfast with their God," (Ps. lxxviii. 8). God ever lays the axe to the root of the tree, (1 Sam. xvi. 7). "An evil heart."

There is something, too, very terrible in the description of that "evil heart." It denotes "one that is industriously wicked." For the word "evil" is derived from a root signifying to labour diligently ; and hence it is, as Owen has remarked, that "the devil is called the evil one, because he is industriously and maliciously wicked." An "evil heart," consequently, marks us out as belonging to the evil one ; and it seems to describe, not the stagnation of actual death, but rather the active turning to corruption of the dead soul ! It is as an evil fountain, betraying itself in a succession of evil and polluting streams, in a series of evil acts, in a settled course of "departing from the living God." How truly awful—a gradual receding from life ; a continual drawing nearer and nearer to the gates of death. Oh, who can contemplate such a course in any one he truly

loves, without crying out with the Apostle, "Take heed, take heed?"

It is possible to do many things, and yet lack the one thing needful. The whole congregation marched together out of Egypt through the wilderness, assembling every Sabbath-day around the tabernacle, going from place to place under the guidance of the same pillar of cloud and of fire, eating the same manna, and drinking the water from the same rock, whilst yet "with *many* of them God was not well pleased," (1 Cor. x. 1-5).

As among the twelve apostles there was one Judas, as among the eight in the ark there was one Ham, or as amongst the seventy elders and Moses and Aaron in the mount, were "Nadab and Abihu" (Exod. xxiv. 9, with Lev. x.), so amongst the Israelites in the wilderness there were many rebels. "*Wherefore take heed, brethren,*" exclaimed the yearning heart of the Apostle, "*lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief,*" lest there be *one* inconstant, *one* unfaithful one among you.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT.

VER. 16-19. "FOR SOME, WHEN THEY HAD HEARD, DID PROVOKE: HOWBEIT NOT ALL THAT CAME OUT OF EGYPT BY MOSES. BUT WITH WHOM WAS HE GRIEVED FORTY YEARS? WAS IT NOT WITH THEM THAT HAD SINNED, WHOSE CARCASSES FELL IN THE WILDERNESS? AND TO WHOM SWARE HE THAT THEY SHOULD NOT ENTER INTO HIS REST, BUT TO THEM THAT BELIEVED NOT? SO WE SEE THAT THEY COULD NOT ENTER IN BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF."

If the type of Israel in the wilderness under Moses afforded ground for solemn warning, it no less suggested most precious encouragement. "*Some*, when they had heard, did provoke: *howbeit not all*." "Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men!" (Rom. xi. 2-4).

Even so in the wilderness there was a faithful remnant. The type, indeed, is most express on this point, affording warning to all, discouragement to none. As Owen has observed, there were three marked exceptions in favour of those who should enter the promised "rest."

1st, The whole tribe of Levi was excepted, for they were not included at all when the other tribes were numbered. "For the Lord had spoken unto Moses, saying, Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel," (Num. i. 47-49).

2^d, All who were under twenty years of age were excepted. "As the Lord commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai:" "from twenty years old and upward," (Num. i. 1-19).

3^d, Caleb and Joshua, though upwards of twenty, were excepted, because they had "another spirit," and followed God fully, (Num. xiv. 24, 30; xxvi. 63-65).

"With whom," then, "was he grieved? And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest?" It was "with them that had *sinned*," and "them that *believed not*," *i. e.*, these who *sinned on* to the end, and those who had *no* faith. "They do *always* err in their heart;" there was no repentance in them toward God, and no faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, (Acts xx. 21).

God forbid that the trembling believer should be discouraged or disheartened, as if he should be "a cast-away." Faith that is but "as a grain of mustard seed" is saving faith: for faith in the bud is as truly faith as when it blossoms and bears fruit. And a heart-searching God can detect it long before the poor, blind, ignorant believer is aware of it in himself. We should take care how we condemn ourselves, and should never venture to judge of our own state unless beneath his eye, and under a felt sense of his presence. Only when Jesus is sitting at the table with his disciples can they safely put the thrilling question, "Is it I?—is it I?" Here then is encouragement for the weak faith of such as come behind trembling, to touch only the border of Christ's garments, (Luke viii. 43-48). Those only are excluded from God's rest who believe "*not*"—who have *no* faith, who do not believe *at all*. The Lord increase your faith! "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," (Rev. ii. 10). Seek to be of the faithful remnant. Get a Caleb-like spirit, of whom

it was said that he "*wholly* followed the Lord," (Num. xxxii. 12). Be a Joshua, saved out of the ruin of the wilderness. Be a Lot, rescued from the destruction of Sodom. Be a Noah, saved in the ark when the world was drowned. Be a Rahab, saving thy family from destruction as well as thyself, (Josh. vi. 22, 23, 25). And be a follower of the true-hearted David, who could say, "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes *alway*, even *unto the end*," (Ps. cxix. 31, 44, 106, 112).

"Some did provoke: howbeit not all."

CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST THE GREATER THAN JOSHUA.

HEB. iv. 1-13.

THE Apostle is but carrying on here the arguments and warnings of the preceding chapter—"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief." But while he was there contemplating Moses, set down, as it were, in the very heart of the wilderness, surrounded by the rebellious Israelites during their forty years of "provocation," he now carries us on to a further stage of their history under Joshua, who led them into the promised land.

It is the same lesson that is taught by both: the greater part of those who left Egypt, perished in the wilderness *through unbelief*; and they to whom the glad tidings of rest were first preached, entered not into rest "*because of unbelief*."

THE PROMISED REST LOST THROUGH UNBELIEF.

VER. 1-5. "LET US THEREFORE FEAR, LEST, A PROMISE BEING LEFT US OF ENTERING INTO HIS REST, ANY OF YOU SHOULD SEEM TO COME SHORT OF IT. FOR UNTO US WAS THE GOSPEL PREACHED, AS WELL AS UNTO THEM: BUT THE WORD PREACHED DID NOT PROFIT THEM, NOT BEING MIXED WITH FAITH IN THEM THAT HEARD IT. FOR WE WHICH HAVE BELIEVED DO ENTER INTO REST; AS HE SAID, AS I HAVE

SWORN IN MY WRATH, IF THEY SHALL ENTER INTO MY REST :
 ALTHOUGH THE WORKS WERE FINISHED FROM THE FOUNDATION
 OF THE WORLD. FOR HE SPAKE IN A CERTAIN PLACE OF THE
 SEVENTH DAY ON THIS WISE, AND GOD DID REST THE SEVENTH
 DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS. AND IN THIS PLACE AGAIN, IF
 THEY SHALL ENTER INTO MY REST."

God's rest is prepared, and the promise is given that some shall enter into it. "We which have *believed* do enter into rest." "When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all *believers*." Faith is the uniting link between the word of promise and the enjoyment of the "rest," (ver. 2, margin). Wherever this true faith is, the promises will be "embraced," and the "better country" will be desired *and obtained*. But oh, that men would understand that there is no middle ground between faith and unbelief; either the 11th chapter of this Epistle, or the 3d and 4th must describe our portion. We must be saved with those who "died *in faith*," or we must perish with those who could not enter in "because of *unbelief*," (Heb. xi. 13; iii. 19; and iv. 6). There is a possibility of coming short, "let us therefore fear." The Calebs and the Joshuas enter in. But to the unbelieving and disobedient, God hath spoken, saying, "I sware in my wrath, *They shall not enter into my rest*." And oh, how fearful to contemplate is their state of ceaseless *unrest*! "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt," (Isa. lvii. 20).

JOSHUA'S REST.

VER. 7, 8. "(AGAIN, HE LIMITETH A CERTAIN DAY, SAYING IN DAVID, TO-DAY, AFTER SO LONG A TIME; AS IT IS SAID, TO-DAY, IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS, FOR IF JESUS (MARG. JOSHUA) HAD GIVEN THEM REST, THEN WOULD HE NOT AFTERWARD HAVE SPOKEN OF ANOTHER DAY."

The quotation from the 95th Psalm, which St Paul has been using so repeatedly, is now brought forward by him to prove that a rest was still spoken of in David's time, as much as five hundred years *after* Joshua, which plainly shewed that Joshua's rest was not the final and complete thing God had promised. Joshua was but a type, as Moses had been before him; and as it was shewn in chap. iii. 3-6, that the house into which we are spiritually built in Christ, was greater than the mere temporary house reared by Moses in the wilderness,—so the rest that remaineth for us as believers in Jesus, is better far than the rest Joshua obtained for Israel in Canaan, (see chap. iv. 8-10).

But if the wilderness-history of Israel under Moses lay enfolded in the mention of "the provocation," no less so would their conflicts and victories be immediately recalled to the Hebrew mind by the very mention of the name of Joshua. The Hebrew word was Jehoshua—signifying a saviour, (Num. xiii. 16). It is the same with the Greek word Jesus (comp. Matt. i. 21); and the people turned to him as their captain, and leader,

and deliverer. And the conflicts and warfare of Joshua's time were remarkably significant. The nations against whom he went to fight were sevenfold: "seven nations greater and mightier than thou," (Deut. vii. 1). And the number of years occupied in taking possession of the land was sevenfold.* In the seventh year the conflicts and the warfare ended. "Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses. And the land *rested from war*." "And the Lord gave them rest round about," &c. (Josh. xxi. 43-45; xxiii. 1). There was throughout a striking foreshadowing of that complete, and final, and victorious rest, which is in reserve for the weary pilgrim and the "war-worn soul." But oh, what does it not tell of the arduousness of the previous conflict! "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life," if thou wouldst hope to follow Jesus, thy true Joshua, into rest.

GOD'S BETTER REST.

VER. 9, 10. "THERE REMAINETH THEREFORE A REST (MARG. KEEPING OF A SABBATH) TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD. FOR HE THAT IS ENTERED INTO HIS REST, HE ALSO HATH CEASED FROM HIS OWN WORKS, AS GOD DID FROM HIS.)"

These words throw light upon those going before, in verses 3, 4. "Although (or "verily") the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he

* In B.C. 1451, Jericho was taken; and in B.C. 1444, the land rested from war, making a period of precisely seven years.

spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." The Hebrew word in Gen. ii. is not the same as in Josh. xxi. or xxiii. Its true and proper meaning is *cessation*; rest, that is, not from weariness or fatigue, but because the work is done. God *ceased* from all his works, because they "were *finished*." It was final, absolute, perfect rest, while Joshua's was "rest from war," which might or might not be broken in upon again. It would seem, therefore, as if the Apostle desired to raise the hopes and expectations of these deeply-tried Hebrew Christians to a most triumphant point—for what present endurance would be thought of, when compared with an entrance into the eternal sabbath-keeping of Jehovah our God? Nothing less than this "keeping of a Sabbath" is in reserve for true believers; a rest like God's. Nay, God's own rest! For it is written, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into *his* rest, any of you should seem to come short of it," (ver. 1).

"There remaineth therefore *a rest* to the people of God. The Apostle seems to have made a word on purpose to give expression to the fulness of his meaning here. He calls it a *sabbatismos*, a "keeping of a Sabbath;" a rest like God's own sabbatical rest, because all work will be completely and for ever *done* and "*finished*." No other word would sufficiently express the perfectness of it. And it belongs to all "the people

of God ;" any one and every one that "is entered into his rest, he also hath *ceased* from his own works, as God did from his." It will be universal rest, not one weary one will be forgotten. It will be eternal rest, for eternity it "*remaineth*." It will be profoundly sacred rest, for it is the "keeping of a *Sabbath*," a day "holy unto the Lord." Whatever there was to mark the peculiar delight God took in the Sabbath-day above every other, will be found in that "keeping of a Sabbath," which remaineth to the people of God, in all its full perfection.

Oh the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of his thoughts towards us, that he should make us partakers with himself of such a rest ! How precious every returning Sabbath should be to us as a pledge and foretaste of that which "*remaineth*," and how careful we should be in the "keeping" of our earthly Sabbaths. Surely it is because God has "hallowed" the day, that ungodly men so stoutly reject it. They cannot bear its sacredness. That separation "from the world" which (as Newton has beautifully expressed it) makes it so "*welcome to the saints*," makes it intolerable to them. One can hardly wonder that they should seek to rob us of it. But it is strange indeed that men with the Bible in their hands can have maintained that it was a Jewish institution merely, and not to be regarded by Christians. Did not God make it to *belong to creation* as long as the heavens and the earth exist ? and did he not make it the foreshadowing of the seven thousand years of rest,

when the six thousand years of work are ended? At all events, it was perfection of rest to him, and will be so to us.

We can hardly contemplate so full and perfect a thing, with our faint powers and imperfect feelings. But faith may study it in the word, as it was made known to Israel in type, first in the seventh *day*, the weekly Sabbath (Lev. xxiii. 3): then in the seventh *month*, the tenth day of the month; "it shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest . . . in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, ye shall celebrate your Sabbath," (Lev. xxiii. 27-32). Again every seventh *year*. "Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the *seventh year* shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard," &c. (Lev. xxv. 1-7). And besides all this, "Thou shalt number *seven Sabbaths of years* unto thee, seven times seven years. &c. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year," &c. (Lev. xxv. 8-12).

The rest that remaineth to the people of God is "a time combining in itself all that was prefigured by the *seventh day*, and in the *seventh month*, and during the *seventh year*." It was "a full picture of rest" that was then given. "Oh to hear earth's hills and valleys ringing with hallelujahs that come from souls rejoicing with true sabbatic rest on their God, while all creation listens

in sabbatic peace and serenity!" (See on Lev. xxv. by A. A. Bonar.)

Oh for hearts that beat in unison with God's heart, when he thus exhibits *his* yearnings toward that happy time—ever keeping the idea of it prominently before his people, as the days, and weeks, and months, and years roll on. The hope of that rest that remaineth, is a hope full of glory. Why do we think and speak of it so seldom? and why enjoy we so little of the foretaste of it? Very beautifully has it been remarked, "Israel's Sabbath was to be 'a rest-day of rest,' a thorough season of repose from care and toil, (Lev. xxv. 3). So, surely, ought thine to be, even in this tumultuous world; and thy soul should thus keep its constant Sabbath, too, since thy work is all ended by thy risen Lord," (Commentary on Leviticus by the Rev. A. A. Bonar). The more we know of the sweetness of the bud, the deeper will be the longings of our souls for the full unfolding of the flower. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Oh for burning, fervent, glowing desires after it!

HOW TO ENTER INTO GOD'S REST.

VER. 6, 11. "SEEING THEREFORE THAT SOME MUST ENTER THEREIN, AND THEY TO WHOM IT WAS FIRST PREACHED ENTERED NOT IN BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF: LET US LABOUR THEREFORE TO ENTER INTO THAT REST, LEST ANY MAN FALL AFTER THE SAME EXAMPLE OF UNBELIEF."

So the words of the Apostle read, leaving out those

which are in a parenthesis, (ver. 7-10). Let us fear, let us labour, lest we come short, and fall through unbelief or "disobedience," (ver. 1, 11, margin). "Strive (literally *agonise*) to enter in at the strait gate," (Luke xiii. 24). "*Be diligent*, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless," (2 Pet. iii. 14). "*Give diligence* to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,"—an entrance *in full sail* into the haven of eternal rest, (2 Pet. i. 5-11). But there is no sailing over a smooth sea to glory. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," (John xvi. 33); temptations must and will arise; the way through the wilderness is rough and thorny. It needs that we "*press* toward the mark," (Phil. iii. 13, 14); that we *strive* for the mastery, (1 Cor. ix. 24-27); that we be "*fervent* in spirit, serving the Lord," (Rom. xii. 11).

"For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what *carefulness* it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, *what fear*, yea, what vehement desire," &c. (2 Cor. vii. 11). Disobedience, careless walking, indulgence in but one cherished lust, may prove our ruin, except we be watchful: for it indicates a heart "not stedfast" with its God, "not right with him," (Ps. lxxviii. 8, 9, 36, 37). We must *labour* to enter in, that is, we must

“diligently endeavour; for such a labouring is to be understood as wherein the mind and whole soul is very intently exercised,” (Owen). “Whereunto I also labour,” writes St Paul, “striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily!” (Col. i. 29). The “labour” implies no more of merit than Joshua’s energy and courage and perseverance proved merit in him for accomplishing victories which were always wrought by God; the two go together in the spiritual as in the temporal, even as the means to the end. “Let us *labour* therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF DECEPTION WITH GOD.

VER. 12, 13. “FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS QUICK, AND POWERFUL, AND SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED SWORD, PIERCING EVEN TO THE DIVIDING ASUNDER OF SOUL AND SPIRIT, AND OF THE JOINTS AND MARROW, AND IS A DISCERNER OF THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTS OF THE HEART. NEITHER IS THERE ANY CREATURE THAT IS NOT MANIFEST IN HIS SIGHT: BUT ALL THINGS ARE NAKED AND OPENED UNTO THE EYES OF HIM WITH WHOM WE HAVE TO DO.”

When God swore in his wrath, “They shall not enter into my rest,” it was because they did “alway err in their *heart*,” (chap. iii. 10, 11), and because he detected in them “an evil *heart* of unbelief, in departing from the living God.” Hence the necessity for “fear” and “carefulness,” lest we should think that we are Israel, because we are “*of* Israel,” (Rom. ix. 6). “Sharper

than any two-edged sword " is the word of God, laying bare the very "inwards" of the victim brought to be offered in sacrifice upon his altar. This is plainly the idea alluded to. "For the first thing that was done with the body of the sacrifice, after it was slain, was its being flayed by the priest, whereby it was *laid open* : after which it was cut into its pieces, and *divided*, so that every part was exposed to view," (Owen). "And he shall flay the burnt-offering, and cut it into his pieces," (Lev. i. 6). But his *inwards* and his legs shall he wash in water : and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt-sacrifice," &c. Nothing can be more solemn or arresting to the awakened conscience than the constant mention of "*the inwards*" throughout those offerings, (Lev. i. iii. iv. vii). It tells in language never to be mistaken, that God desireth "*truth in the inward parts*," (Ps. li. 6). "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins," (Jer. xvii. 10 ; Ps. vii. 9) ; "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." Oh what a laying bare of the inner man is this ! Can any secret workings of unbelief escape detection ? "No, not one." We may deceive ourselves as Saul did, when he said to Samuel, "Blessed be thou of the Lord ; I have performed the commandment of the Lord." But we shall not deceive God ; for *He* will ask the startling question, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear ?" (1 Sam. xv. 13, 14). We can

hide nothing from him. Like Adam, he will summon us from our hiding-places, and put the one question to us, which it is impossible to evade,—“Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” (Gen. iii. 8-11). How vain are all our fig-leaf coverings, under the piercing eye of him who “is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart!” How utterly vain and useless are mere outward forms of religion, when the searching process is carrying on in the “dividing asunder of *soul and spirit*!” Truly,

“The leprosy lies deep within.”

“When the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be *deeper than the skin* of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy,” (Lev. xiii. 3, &c.). It is the deep-seated plague-spot that betrays the evil heart of unbelief. It is not leprosy if it be only on the surface, covering the skin externally, (Lev. xiii. 12, 13), but it is leprosy when it is “*deeper than the skin*.” “Out of *the heart* proceed evil thoughts,” &c. “All these evil things *come from within*, (“deeper than the skin”), and defile the man,” (Matt. xv. 19; Mark vii. 21-23).

And as it was *the knife* of the priest that lay bare “the inwards” of the victim offered in sacrifice upon the altar, cutting all in sunder as with a two-edged sword, that could pierce even to the dividing of the “*joints and marrow*,”—so it was *the eye* of the priest that was to discern and detect the existence of the leprosy. “All

things are naked and opened unto *the eyes* of him with whom we have to do," or, "to whom we must give account." "The priest shall *look* on the plague in the skin of the flesh,"—"the priest shall look upon it"—"the priest shall consider," (Lev. xiii. 3, 13, 25). It is Jesus our High Priest, "unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid;" whose "eyes were as a flame of fire" when he walked in the midst of the seven churches, that he might "know" their works, (Rev. i., ii., iii.) He it is who holds the sharp two-edged sword, and searches out the "hidden things" of Esau! (Obadiah, ver. 6), whose "eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good," running "to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose *heart* is perfect toward him," (Prov. xv. 3; 2 Chron. xvi. 9),—the heart perfect! Oh! can we bear the thought of exposure to the scrutiny of that all-seeing eye? "Let us search and try our hearts."

We have a most striking instance in the 139th Psalm, of a soul willingly offering itself to the high priest in order to undergo this searching discipline. "Search me, O God," exclaims the Psalmist, "and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts." The very words he uses tell that it was to no ordinary investigation of character that he was submitting himself. "Search" signifies to search minutely to the very bottom, to expose thoroughly, &c. And the *trying* process to which he asks to be subjected is that of the passing

of metals ! Yet he shrinks not. "Thou *hast* searched me, and known me. Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses (marg. "*winnowest*") my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it *altogether*." Yea, "thou hast possessed my *reins* ;" my heart, my thoughts, my reins, all, all is known to thee ; "the inwards" are all naked and opened before thee, yet "I will praise thee," for thy thoughts are precious unto me ! Yes, "he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God," (John iii. 20, 21). Jesus is "the light," and walking with him is walking "in the light," (1 John, i. 7). Do we thus walk with our great high priest, in the light of the heavenly sanctuary ? He is the incarnate word, "quick and powerful—a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Man is lost in attempting to discriminate minutely between the "soul and spirit," but Jesus divides them clean asunder, severing the very "*thoughts* and *intents*" of the innermost recesses of the heart.

Oh ! it is a "heart-searching, rein-trying, truth-requiring, holy, holy, holy God," with whom we have to do, (J. H. Evans). "I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness," (1 Chron. xxix. 17). Let us therefore take heed, lest there be in any of us "an evil heart of unbelief, in *departing from* the living God." "Hold fast that which thou hast," (Rev. iii. 1-11).

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST THE GREATER PRIEST THAN AARON.

HEB. iv. 14-16 and v. 1-10.

"HOLY brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, *consider the* Apostle and *High Priest* of our profession, Christ Jesus," (Chap. iii. 1).

JESUS, OUR PRIEST, AS SON OF GOD.

VER. 14. "SEEING THEN THAT WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST, THAT IS PASSED INTO THE HEAVENS, JESUS THE SON OF GOD, LET US HOLD FAST OUR PROFESSION."

"A great high priest." How sweet to see the pre-eminence ever given to Jesus! Aaron was God's "high priest;" but Jesus is his "*great* high priest." "Great," because he is "*his Son*, whom he hath appointed heir of all things," and whom he hath "made so much better than the angels," calling himself his "Father;" yea, and owning him as "God," too. For "*unto the Son* he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!" (Heb. i. 2, 4, 5, 8).

"We have a great high priest—Jesus, the Son of God." Owen says it should be "*that* Son of God," to express the emphasis in the original; which looks as if the Apostle were referring to what he had said of him as the *Son of God* in the 1st chapter, just as in

the next verse he seems to be looking back to what he had written of him as *Son of Man* in chap. ii.

"We have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, that Son of God." He contemplates him, not as on the earth, but as passed into (literally "through") the heavens, within the vail, whither the high priest alone could go, (Lev. xvi. 2-17). He is gone into the very presence of Jehovah, (symbolised by the Shekinah glory in the holy of holies), he is "ascended up far above all heavens," (Eph. iv. 10). He is *where his Father is*, (John xvi. 28). The heavens have received him until the times of restitution of all things, (Acts iii. 21). He is "gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him," (1 Pet. iii. 22). And all this intimates his greatness, his vast superiority to Aaron. Our calling is a heavenly calling, and if we would consider our High Priest, we must consider him in "the heavens." Oh, what a feeling of security this should give us; for the priests of Aaron's line, being of the earth, earthy, have failed, and Israel is left without a priest. But "*we have a great high priest*," even Jesus in the heaven of heavens, and he cannot fail us, for he is "the Son of God." "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

Precious, then, deeply precious, should the assurance be to us, that "*we have a great high priest*." Yet we have need to be bidden to "consider" him, for too

many Christians live *almost* as if they knew not that they have a high priest: as if in the abandonment of Judaism, they had left all thoughts of priesthood behind them. Oh, for a livelier sense of all that Jesus is to us as our "Great High Priest!"

"The want of living up to this truth evacuates the religion of most men in the world," (Owen). Let us then assure our hearts of this blessed truth that "we *have* a great high priest," that there is no doubt, no uncertainty, no room for anxiety about it. We have one. We know it; we are sure of it. We are not running uncertainly, nor fighting, as one that beateth the air, (1 Cor. ix. 26). We can confidently affirm with the Apostle, "I *know* whom I have believed, and am *persuaded* that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him," &c., (2 Tim. i. 12). *Knowing* in yourselves that *ye have* in heaven a better and an enduring substance, (Heb. x. 34; 2 Cor. v. 1).

"Our profession" is no mere empty shadow, but a deep and living reality. We cannot realise this too strongly, nor overestimate the intense importance of living as men in earnest about it. Eternity hangs suspended upon it. And "what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26). Oh! "let us *hold fast* our profession." Hold it with all your strength, tenaciously and firmly. Seize it, embrace it, retain it. The word which the Apostle uses here, implying all this, well describes the

energy of mind with which he would have us grasp the vital truth :—"We have a great high priest, that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." How "great" a high priest ! how divine !

JESUS OUR PRIEST, AS SON OF MAN.

VER. 15. "FOR WE HAVE NOT AN HIGH PRIEST WHICH CANNOT BE TOUCHED WITH THE FEELING OF OUR INFIRMITIES; BUT WAS IN ALL POINTS TEMPTED LIKE AS WE ARE, YET WITHOUT SIN."

"In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted," (Chap. ii. 17, 18).

Jesus is a greater priest than Aaron still, even though we view him now as Son of Man. For while tried in all points like unto his sinful brethren, he himself is "*without sin.*"

What rest, what peace, what comfort unutterable there is in this ! "We have a great high priest," "in all points tempted like as we are, *yet without sin.*" This is just what we feel we want, and it is all we can possibly need. How amazing the *perfection* of the provision God has made for us.

"Jesus at the right hand of the Father is yet present with all his brethren and sisters here. His human nature is at the right hand of God upon the throne—a Lamb as it had been slain. But his divine nature is

unlimited, fills all worlds, and is present in every disciple's dwelling. His divine nature thus brings in continual information to his human heart of everything that is going on in the hearts and history of his people, so that his human heart beats towards us just as if he were sitting by our side," (Extract).

Having eyes "as a flame of fire," to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, nothing can intervene to dim his sight of the thousand secret sources of anguish which daily make our hearts to ache. There is not a pang that rends our hearts, which in all its bitterness, and all its agonising keenness, its causes, its ramifications, and its coming results, is not *completely known* to Jesus. Nor is it merely knowledge. It is not a *stranger*, nor an *unconcerned spectator* that we have to do with:—

His heart is made of tenderness,
His bowels melt with love.

Touch'd with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame;
He knows what sore temptations mean
For he has felt the same.—(WATTS.)

He can "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," for he was "in all points tempted like as we are."

He can *really sympathise*, for he really *shares* our griefs. "In all *their* afflictions *he* was afflicted," (Isa. lxiii. 9). "Surely he hath *borne our griefs*, and *carried* our sorrows." "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses," (Isa. liii. 4; Matt. viii. 17).

How was *he* "moved with compassion," when he saw

the widow's only son carried out, and realised in himself what must have been the feelings of that bereaved *mother's* heart! (Luke vii. 11-15).

How beautifully he represents himself in the parable of the prodigal son, as moved with a *father's* yearnings over a long-lost child, "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him," (Luke xv. 20).

How exquisitely tender were his feelings *as a son*, when in the moment of his agony upon the cross, seeing "his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy Son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!" (John xix. 26, 27.)

And how profoundly deep was his sympathy *as a brother* ("born for adversity"), when at the grave of Lazarus, seeing Mary "weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, *he* groaned in the spirit, and was troubled," yea, and *wept with them*; as it is written, "*Jesus wept!*" (John xi. 33-35).

Circumstances of suffering, sin, and death, all alike called forth his sympathy, yea, even the sufferings of *the body* alone were enough to excite his compassion. "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, *because they were tired and lay down!*" (Matt. ix. 36, margin). Why was this, but just because he knew by his own feelings what it was to be "*wearied* with his journey," (John iv. 6). Oh, the

depths of untold sympathy in Jesus! It is only as we "suffer with him" that we learn them.

But he knows the value of sympathy to us, for he felt the want of it, and had deep longings of heart for it, as the psalms abundantly reveal. "Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour; mine adversaries are all before thee. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I *looked* for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none," (Ps. lxix. 19, 20). "I *looked* on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul," (Ps. cxlii. 4, 5). I *looked*, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold," (Isa. lxiii. 5). Oh that disappointed look, how much it tells of inward suffering! How truly was he "a man of sorrows, and *acquainted* with griefs," (Isa. liii. 3). How deep and varied were his "temptations!" "Forty days" he was "tempted of the devil," (Luke iv. 1-13). Again and again he was tempted of men—of the Pharisees and Sadducees, of the Herodians and of the people, (Matt. xvi. 1-4; xix. 3-12; xxii. 15-40; Mark xii. 15; Luke xi. 14-20). So that we read on one occasion, "the Scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things," &c. (Luke xi. 53, 54). The desertion and unfaithfulness of his friends tried him sorely. "For it was not an enemy that reproached me: *then I could*

have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance," (Ps. lv. 12, 13). Derision and reproach were *heart-breaking* unto him, (Ps. lxi. 20). And that his own sufferings were a source of intense trial to him is sufficiently plain from his own words in John xii. 27: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." And again in Matt. xxvi. 39, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." It is as if he were just then feeling "*ready to halt*," yet straitened *till baptized* with the baptism that he had to be baptized with, (Ps. xxxviii. 17, with Luke xii. 50).

Most truly was he tempted in all points like as we are, only with far deeper intensity. "Can ye drink of the cup that *I* drink of?" was his searching question to the two who understood not the full connexion between present suffering and future glory, (Mark x. 38). Yet to those who in any measure suffer with him here, he gives to be glorified with him hereafter, (Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 1, 12; 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13). And pre-eminently to those who shared something of his earthly trials, did he say on the night before he suffered, "Ye are they which have *continued with me in my temptations*. And I appoint unto you a kingdom," &c. (Luke xxii. 28-30).

Those prolonged *continued* "temptations," how much they tell of days, and years, and hours of acquaintance with grief! "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

Jesus, my sorrow lies too deep
For human sympathy;
It knows not how to tell itself
To any but to thee.

Thou dost remember, amidst all
The glories of thy throne,
The sorrows of humanity :—
For they were once thine own.

Yea, and as if thou wouldst be God,
Even in misery,
Thou 'st left no sorrow, but thine own
Unreach'd by sympathy.

Jesus, my fainting spirit brings
Its fearfulness to thee;
Thine eye alone can penetrate
The clouded mystery.

And is it not enough, O Lord?
That holy sympathy!
That sorrow cannot be too deep,
That I may bring to thee.

"*Holy* sympathy." This lies at the very root of its preciousness to us sinners. It is the perfection of holiness in his nature and his person, that makes the sympathy of Jesus so perfect. There is not a defect in it—no shortcoming, no failure; for there is no "sin." He was in all points *tempted* like as we are, *yet without* sin. "Temptation is not sin in the heart; it is sin pre-

sented to the mind. And if we do not consent to it, we are sinless in temptation," (Tait). Temptation properly means, putting to the proof. Jesus alluded to it when he said, "The prince of this world cometh, *and hath nothing in me*," (John xiv. 30). Tempted, yet without sin. He suffered most intensely, and most extensively: there was a depth and a breadth in what he went through such as no human heart can conceive, nor tongue express.

He was the meat-offering "of fine flour"—*bruised*; or of "green ears of corn dried *by the fire*, even corn *beaten out* of full ears;" which told of his crushing weight of endurance, (Lev. ii.) And he was the burnt-offering which ascended as a sweet savour to the Lord, *whole, perfect, and entire* (Lev. i.)—tried to the utmost as a meat-offering, yet a *whole* burnt-offering, without one blemish!—tempted in all points—yet without sin. "He hath made him to be sin for us *who knew no sin*" (2 Cor. v. 21), "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," (1 Pet. ii. 22). "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," (Heb. vii. 26). "*Without sin.*" Sin is a deadening thing; had there been sin in Jesus, he would not have been alive to the painfulness of temptation as we know he was. Sin is a blinding thing; had there been sin in him, he would not have seen as he did the dishonour that temptation prompted him to cast on God through unbelief. Sin is a stupifying and

benumbing thing ; had there been the slightest taint of sin in Jesus, all the keen sensitiveness of his holy nature would have been clouded over, and he would have ceased to *feel* the exquisite agony of temptation as he felt it, when he was "*without sin.*" But he felt it *perfectly*. Hence his perfect sympathy with all his tempted ones.

THE PRIEST UPON HIS THRONE DISPENSING MERCY.

VER. 16. "LET US THEREFORE COME BOLDLY UNTO THE THRONE OF GRACE, THAT WE MAY OBTAIN MERCY, AND FIND GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED."

Behold the throne of grace.
The promise calls me near ;
There Jesus shews a smiling face,
And waits to answer prayer.

That rich atoning blood
Which sprinkled round I see,
Provides for those who come to God
An all-prevailing plea.

My soul, ask what thou wilt,
Thou canst not be too bold :
Since his own blood for thee he spilt,
What else can he withhold !—(NEWTON).

"He shall be a priest upon his throne" (Zech. vi. 13) ; a royal priest ; one who, like Solomon, can give "of his royal bounty," whatsoever he will, (1 Kings x. 13). And it is an exquisite character that is given to his kingly administration, when his throne is distinguished from every other as "the throne of grace." "His throne is upholden by mercy," (Prov. xx. 28.)

"His *favour* is as *dew* upon the grass;" so attractive, refreshing, and vivifying to all within its influence, is the *grace* bestowed so freely from his throne, (Prov. xix. 12). Ezekiel had a wondrous sight of this throne in his vision by the River Chebar. "Above the firmament . . . was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire-stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a *man* above upon it. As the appearance of the *bow* that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about," (Ezek. i. 26, 28). Grace encircled the throne while Jesus was seen upon it. Well might David say, "My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King.—*Grace* is poured into thy lips!" (Ps. xlv. 1, 2). His throne is "the throne of grace."

And there we may "find grace to help in time of need." In a time of need Paul went thither, and the Lord said unto him, "My grace is sufficient for thee," (2 Cor. xii. 9). It was emphatically grace *to help* that was given him, enabling him to bear his trial, for the trial was not removed. In a time of great need, the apostles unitedly went thither; "and when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness. And *great grace* was upon them all," (Acts iv. 31-33). It is always given according to our need. "As thy days,

so shall thy strength be," (Deut. xxxiii. 25). And it is given seasonably, opportunely, "in *due season*." "God is our refuge and strength, a *very present help* in trouble," (Ps. xli. 1). Or it might be rendered, "God is a help, wonderfully found *in straits*," (Owen). Thus it is the "time of need," and the character of needy ones, that furnishes us with our plea for going to "the throne of grace." *There* is our "great high priest," able to supply *all* our need, "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19), that he may shew forth "*the exceeding riches of his grace!*" (Eph. ii. 4-8). Hear him say, "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them," &c. (Isa. xli. 17, 18).

"For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a *strength to the needy in his distress*, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall," (Isa. xxv. 4). Truly Jesus is to his people a strong habitation whereunto they may "*continually resort*," (Ps. lxxi. 3), at the very moment when the danger is pressing, and the distress urgent. "*What time I am afraid* I will trust in thee," (Ps. lvi. 3). "When my father and my mother forsake me, *then* the Lord will take me up," (Ps. xxvii. 10). "*In the day* when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul," (Ps. cxxxviii. 3). No matter what may be the emergency, there is "grace to help" for "every time of need." "For

this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee *in a time of finding*," (Ps. xxxii. 6, margin).

Tried and harassed believer, worn down with daily cares and anxieties, oh, take them to the throne of grace, that you may find grace to help you to bear them all—grace "sufficient for thee!" Remember that the Lord's way of maintaining your cause and the cause of all his people is this, "the thing of a day in his day *as the matter shall require*," (1 Kings viii. 59, margin), precisely supplying the need, in the felt time of need. You are not straitened in God, for "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work," (2 Cor. ix. 8). Weigh well each word, and be ashamed of your lack. "Ye have not, because ye ask not," for "he giveth *more* grace," (James iv. 2, 6). His very throne is "the throne of grace."

And how impressively we are taught to view that throne in connexion with *redeeming grace*, when in heaven itself we are told that we shall see in the midst of the throne, "a Lamb as it had been slain!" (Rev. v. 6; xxii. 3, 4). It carries back the thoughts at once to the blood-stained mercy-seat in the holiest of all. "Thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark. *And there I will meet with thee*, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat," (Exod. xxv. 17, 21, 22). "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of

grace, that we may obtain mercy," even like the poor publican, who, "standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be *merciful* to me a sinner," (Luke xviii. 13). (The words *ἰλασθητι μοι*, point directly to *ἰλαστήριον*, the mercy-seat.) "To the Lord our God belong *mercies* and forgivenesses," (Dan. ix. 9). How sweet in the confidence of this to go to him whenever a sense of sin is burdening us, and to cry, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the *multitude* of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions," (Psa. li. 1). How precious the use of the plural word! it is not mercy only, but "*mercies*;" yea, and there is a very "*multitude*" of them in store for us! For he is "*plenteous in mercy*"—"abundant in mercy." "Thou art the same Lord, *whose property is always to have mercy!*" (Ps. lxxxvi. 5, 13, 15; Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; 1 Pet. i. 3; Ps. ciii. 11). Though we go every day, and all day long, "mercy" shall still be "*multiplied*" unto us! (Jude 2). The great high priest is ever before the mercy-seat, and we may go on looking for his mercy, even "*unto eternal life*," (Jude 21). And it is for these ever fresh supplies of mercy that we are here invited to come to the throne of grace. This is implied in the word "*help*" or succour, which is rather "*the daily access of believers unto him for grace and assistance*," than the first approach of sinners for pardon, (Owen). And who that knows what it is

to fall into one sin after another, and to get into one difficulty after another, but feels how much they need the encouragement here offered? For *how ashamed* we feel to go again, and again, and again, to seek forgiveness! as one has beautifully remarked, after speaking of a felt sense of guilt, "Will God receive me again? Ashamed—but constrained to look again into the face of free sovereign grace! Wonderful God! he had kept the door still open—I entered again into peace with my Father through the blood of the Lamb!" (Extract from the Journal of the Rev. W. H. Hewitson.)

Yes, we may "come boldly!" the words are inexpressibly full of beauty, and richness of meaning. They tell at once of the reverential awe with which the sinner should approach the mercy-seat, or propitiatory, and of the perfect freedom of access which we, like Moses, may realise, when the Lord meets with us and communes with us, "as a man speaketh unto his friend," (Exod. xxxiii. 11).

The word rendered "*come*," is one that implies that solemn drawing nigh in worship, with which the priests of old approached the holy place. (See Owen.) All must be reverential. And yet it is to be with holy liberty and boldness, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," (2 Cor. iii. 17). "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption," &c. (Rom. viii. 15). The word "boldly" has been beautifully defined,

signifying "*utterance of whatever occurs.*" What an idea it thus gives of the pouring out of the whole heart to God in prayer! telling him everything, the great things and the small, things temporal and things spiritual; personal, family, national things.

What is the state *of mind* that is not brought before God in the Psalms? (See especially Ps. cxix., where God is twice entreated, within a very few verses, to make those circumstances a matter of consideration! "Consider mine affliction"—"Consider how I love thy precepts," ver. 153, 159).

Hannah told him all her family and *domestic* trials: "I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit," &c., and "have poured out my soul before the Lord," &c. (1 Sam. i. and ii. 1).

Paul prayed "thrice" for the removal of "a thorn in the flesh," (2 Cor. xii. 7, 8). Jehoshaphat, Asa, and Hezekiah teach us how our armies, and kingdoms, and letters may be prayed over, (2 Chron. xv. xx.) "Hezekiah received the letter from the hands of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed," &c. (Isa. xxxvii. 14-20).

"Come *boldly*:" tell Jesus everything. Think nothing too small to speak to him about. How beautifully has it been remarked, "The things that are on the heart, that are distracting the mind, that have filled the heart so full that there is no room for anything else,

are all considered too small and undignified to come within the pale of a prayer a faithless servant is wasting his property a child is vexatious or unruly, a friend has made promises and failed to keep them, &c. ; but all this trouble forms no subject-matter for prayer, though there it is all the while lying like lead on the heart," &c. But should it be thus? no—"Multiplied cares and trials are only new avenues of acquaintance between us and heaven." (From "Earthly Care a Heavenly Discipline.")

What *various hindrances* we meet
In coming to a mercy-seat!
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer
But wishes to be *always* there!

THE DESIGN OF THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD.

CHAP. V. VER. 1. "FOR EVERY HIGH PRIEST, TAKEN FROM AMONG MEN, IS ORDAINED FOR MEN IN THINGS PERTAINING TO GOD, THAT HE MAY OFFER BOTH GIFTS AND SACRIFICES FOR SINS."

Every high priest is ordained, or appointed to his office, in order that he may offer gifts and sacrifices. And whence the necessity for this offering up of "gifts and sacrifices?"

Solemn, solemn truth: it is "*for sins*." Had there been no sin, there would have been no high priest, no sacrifices, no exercise of the priestly office at all. All tells of sin. Sin lies at the very root of it all. Every high priest is ordained that he may offer "*for sins*." How pre-eminently true it is of Jesus!

"Thou shalt make his soul an offering *for sin*," (Isa. liii. 10).

"He is the propitiation *for our sins*," (1 John ii. 2).

"Who gave Himself *for our sins*," (Gal. i. 4).

Ah! it is only as the soul grows in the deeper consciousness of its sinfulness before God, that it learns to value Jesus as its high priest. But "*for our sins*," we should not need him in this character. Therefore it is by such an one as can most truthfully declare, "*my sin is ever before me*," that this precious epistle which deals so largely with this solemn subject, is most prized.

In looking back upon the blood of the thousands and tens of thousands of innocent and unblemished lambs, that have been slain and offered up in sacrifice since the beginning, what intense prostration of spirit it should excite when we remember that it has all been "*for sins*!" On looking forward into the future of eternity, *what* may we not conceive to be the adoring wonder of the multitude of the redeemed, when they behold in the very midst of the throne "*a Lamb* as it had been slain," and when *they* remember that they were washed *from their sins* "in his own blood!" (Rev. i. 5).

The sacrifice of life—death—bloodshedding, all, all is "*for sins*," yea, "*for our sins*!" Shall not the recollection humble us? Must it not have been deeply humbling to Adam and Eve, when, to cover the nakedness which until their fall had been no shame to them, the Lord God made "*coats of skins*" to clothe them!

(Gen. iii. 21). From the moment that "sin entered into the world, and death by sin," there "was no remission" save through the shedding of blood, (Rom. v. 12; Heb. ix. 22). The book of Leviticus is *filled* with the directions God gave to Moses and Aaron, concerning the offering of these "gifts and sacrifices *for sins*." For this was emphatically and pre-eminently the object for which the priesthood was designed.

"There are things to be done with God on behalf of men *as sinners*. Hence arose the necessity of priests. . . . There is that now to be done for them, which in their own persons they cannot perform. It was therefore with respect unto Christ's future priesthood, that any one was ever admitted to treat with God about sin." (Owen).

Sin, having separated between us and our God, we cannot now have access to him, save through the high priest. We cannot offer for ourselves, neither can any but a priest present our offerings for us. For thus it is written, "I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and *the stranger that cometh nigh* shall be put to *death*," (Num. xviii. 7).

All must go through the priest's hands. Yes, *all*: "both gifts and sacrifices." That the shedding of blood must be a priestly act would be obvious to all, but it was a step beyond this to learn that man could not so much as present to God the first-fruits of his land, or corn, or oil, or any voluntary gift, without a priest to offer it for him!

And oh ! what a lesson this teaches *us* ! How many professing Christians look to Jesus indeed to offer an atonement for their sins, for that they feel they cannot do ; but they do *not* so look to him to offer their prayers, and affections, and talents, and wealth, and services rendered to the saints, their praises, their daily duties—for this they think they *can* do. Moreover, they would think it to be verily beneath the dignity of the Son of God to attend to all these meaner things. They consider not that the high priest was ordained to this very end—that he might offer “*both GIFTS and sacrifices.*”

We live much too independently, even as Christians, of the Lord Jesus, as our great high priest. We should as universally present our daily “*gifts and sacrifices*” unto God, *through our High Priest*, as the Israelites of old took everything to their priests to be offered for them. Not to do so, is really to undervalue and practically to set aside a large part of the work Jesus has undertaken for us. It is to do him great dishonour, and to limit our view of what we owe him. The Lord teach us more of his own mind and thoughts concerning Jesus, and lead us to value his *present* work on our behalf, more and more in the daily offering up of our gifts and “*spiritual sacrifices,*” (1 Pet. ii. 5).

THE IMPERFECTION OF THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD.

VER. 2, 3. “WHO CAN HAVE COMPASSION ON THE IGNORANT, AND ON THEM THAT ARE OUT OF THE WAY ; FOR THAT HE HIMSELF ALSO IS COMPASSED WITH INFIRMITY. AND BY REASON HEREOF HE

OUGH, AS FOR THE PEOPLE, SO ALSO FOR HIMSELF, TO OFFER FOR SINS."

This is spoken of "every high priest taken *from among men*." He is compassed with infirmity as they are, and is under the necessity of offering for his own sins as much as for theirs. This brings down the priests to a level, as it were, with the people, forbidding them ever to say, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou," (Isa. lxx. 5). It makes it only reasonable that they should bear with the people, seeing they themselves were so similarly circumstanced. The principle is the same with that laid down by the Apostle for the Galatian converts, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of *meekness*; considering thyself, *lest thou also* be tempted," (Gal. vi. 1). Instead of "being *lords* over God's heritage," the priests were expressly to be men of "like passions with the people," that being compassed with the like infirmities, they might "reasonably bear with them," (See the margin).

The word rendered "compassion" in this place, occurs nowhere else, and differs widely in its meaning from the word rendered "compassion" in Heb. x. 34, or 1 Pet. iii. 8, where it signifies sympathy or fellow-feeling. Here it is compounded of two Greek words, signifying moderation and passion, and thus it denotes, "to bear injuries with moderation, and to have compassion for the faults of others." This distinction gives a beautiful

significance to the type. For while Jesus "*can* have compassion on the ignorant" in this sense, he could never have had "compassion" with sinners in the sense of sympathy or fellow-feeling in their sins.

Alas ! how little did the priests of Aaron's line maintain their character of *bearing with* the people ! God's controversy with them on this very ground is most striking. "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost ; *but with force and cruelty* have ye ruled them," (Ezek. xxxiv. 1-4).

With Aaron, indeed, it was otherwise. He sinned grievously on more than one occasion, but it taught him to feel compassion for, and not to deal hardly with, the people. Never could he have lost the recollection of the golden calf, which cost the lives of three thousand men. "Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that *thou* hast brought so great a sin upon them ?" (Exod. xxxii. 21, &c.).

How it must have risen up before him in all its heinousness, when he heard the Lord speak unto Moses, saying, "If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord, concerning

things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them: *if the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; (or "so as to cause the people to sin,")* then let him bring *for his sin* which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord *for a sin-offering*," (Lev. iv. 1-3). And then to testify God's holy displeasure against his sin, he was to carry forth the whole bullock "without the camp," to be burnt as an unclean thing, (ver. 4-12).

On the day of his consecration, too, how powerfully was he reminded that he himself was "compassed with infirmity;" was reckoned *as a sinner!* yea, and as if to impress a sevenfold solemnity on the events of that day, and to give time for the deepening of the lessons to be learnt, there was a *seven days' preparation* for his entering on his office. For thus we read: "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, *and a bullock for the sin-offering*, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; and gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." Then in the presence of all the people "Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water," and put upon Aaron the garments of the high priest, and poured upon him the holy anointing oil; and "brought the bullock *for the sin-offering*:" and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the *sin-offering*." This was the first

of all the offerings; then followed "the ram for the burnt-offering," and afterwards, "the ram of consecration." Then "for seven days" they were not to go out of the door of the tabernacle, day and night, till the days of their consecration were ended, (Lev. viii. 1-36).

"And it came to pass on the eighth day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel; and he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf *for a sin-offering*, and a ram for a burnt-offering, without blemish, and offer them before the Lord," &c.

And mark the distinctness with which Aaron is taught that this sin-offering is "for himself." "Go unto the altar, and offer *thy* sin-offering, and thy burnt-offering, and make an atonement *for thyself*, and for the people, &c. Aaron therefore went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin-offering, *which was for himself*," &c. (Lev. ix. 1, 11). Being himself compassed with infirmity, he was bound to offer *for his own sins*, as well as for the people's.

Nor was he to suppose that the atonement made for him when he first became high priest sufficed for the remainder of his life. No—from year to year, as the Day of Atonement (or *Atonements*) came round, Aaron as much as the people needed to have his sins atoned for, (Lev. xvi. 1, &c).

"Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place, with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering," &c. (ver. 3).

"It is to be remarked, that no details are given respecting any of the burnt-offerings of this day. The details are all confined to the sin-offerings. . . . On this day the Lord wished to fix the attention of all upon *the sin-offerings*, as it was a day of expiation for the confessed, defined, specified sins of Israel." (From a Commentary on Leviticus. By A. A. Bonar.) Aaron then, "shall offer his bullock of the sin-offering *which is for himself*, and make an atonement *for himself*, and for *his* house," (ver. 6). "And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin-offering which is *for himself*, and shall make *an atonement for himself*, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering which is *for himself*," &c. (ver. 11-14).

With a bowl filled with its blood in one hand, and a censer full of burning coals in the other, "he sprinkles a handful of incense upon the fire, whose sweet fragrance instantly fills the courts of the Lord's house. What a glorious scene for sinners. The sinner's offering is accepted! The sweet savour breathes over it and ascends to heaven But Aaron's next step is yet more wondrous. He advances to the holiest of all, passing through the holy place, blood and sweet incense all the time held up in his hands. The light from the golden candlestick directs his reverent steps to the vail, which he draws aside. The bright cloud of glory pours forth its full radiance upon him—too bright for his feeble eye, were it not softened by the cloud of incense that arises

from the censer in his hand. Thus enveloped, he sprinkles the blood on the mercy-seat seven times. But what a moment was this! *It is his own sins that he is thus confessing*; his own death, his own deserved wrath, is what is spread out before the Lord in that sprinkled blood! . . . Again and again he thus presents his atonement, till the seventh time ends the whole transaction, and he stands alone with God, justified, accepted, loved, and blessed." (Commentary on Leviticus, by Rev. A. A. Bonar.)

Oh, with *what* feelings must Aaron have come forth from that holy place, to offer the sin-offering "*for the people!*" (ver. 15.) "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; *for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.*"

It is important to observe the kind of sins here alluded to,—sins of ignorance. It is a distinction maintained all throughout Scripture, that while all other degrees of sin may be forgiven, presumptuous or wilful sins have no atonement made for them. The Lord revealed his name to Moses, as the God, forgiving "iniquity, transgression, and sin," just as on the day of atonement, Aaron confessed over the head of the live goat, "*all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins,*" (Exod. xxxiv. 7; Lev. xvi. 21). It was for the sin *alone* of doing ought "presumptuously" or "with an high hand," that any soul was to be cut off. (See Num. xv. 24–31.) It is

forcibly illustrated in the case of Korah, which immediately follows upon the law given to Moses concerning it. (See Num. xvi.) For while Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and their company sinned indeed most presumptuously against the Lord, and were cut off in their sin, *the congregation* who on the morrow murmured against Moses and Aaron, had atonement made for *them*, and the plague was stayed which had begun amidst them. And how beautifully the conduct of Aaron displayed itself on that occasion, when out of a heart moved with compassion for them, he "*ran into the midst*" of them, and "*stood between the dead and the living.*" He could have compassion on them, for he himself was compassed with infirmity. Possibly the recollection of *his own sin*, when he and Miriam had spoken against Moses, and he had looked upon his own sister, and beheld her "*leprous, white as snow,*" may have been fresh in his mind, (See Num. xii.), and may have deepened his compassion for them.

At all events, we are taught most impressively by the history of Aaron, that the high priests "taken from among men," were compassed with infirmity. For never till his dying hour was Aaron "*without sin.*" When the forty years' wanderings of Israel were just brought to their close, and they had reached the very borders of the promised land, there, instead of speaking to the rock as God commanded them, "Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation before the rock; and

he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must *we* fetch you water out of this rock?" and Moses smote it twice. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor, saying, *Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah,*" &c. (Num. xx. 7-12, 23-28). Aaron felt in the mount where he died, *I am a sinner*. Yet he knew the blood upon the mercy-seat had atoned for his sins, and while he offered "*for himself,*" he compassionately offered "*for the people*" also.

AARON'S CALL TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

VER. 4. "AND NO MAN TAKETH THIS HONOUR UNTO HIMSELF, BUT HE THAT IS CALLED OF GOD, AS WAS AARON."

"Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, *from among* the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office." So spake God unto Moses, (Exod. xxviii. 1). "Thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and *they* shall wait on their priest's office; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death," (Num. iii. 10; Exod. xxix. 44).

Here is choice, selection, special calling. Not only was the tribe of Levi chosen from among the twelve tribes, "*from among* the children of Israel," but Aaron and his sons were chosen out from the Levites, to be pre-eminently holy to the Lord, (Num. xviii. 1-20). Aaron was "*called of God*" to be his "high priest."

The rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, only resulted in bringing to light God's choice of Aaron more strongly than before. "They gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, &c. And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: and he spake unto Korah, and unto all his company, saying, Even to-morrow the Lord *will shew* who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: *even him whom he hath chosen* will he cause to come near unto him," (Num. xvi. 1-5). And how did the Lord shew this on the morrow? By causing the earth to open her mouth, and swallow up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all that appertained to them, so that "they perished from among the congregation," whilst a fire from the Lord "consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense;" and with their brazen censers "were made broad plates for a covering of the altar, to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger *which is not of the seed of Aaron*, come near to offer incense before the Lord," (ver. 16-40).

Notwithstanding this solemn and fearful manifestation from the Lord, that he would suffer no man to take to himself the honour of the priesthood, save him whom he had called, the people murmured *again* against Moses and against Aaron the very next day, so that a plague was sent among them which consumed "fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah," (ver. 41-50).

The Lord then took other means, more abiding and enduring, to prove to those that remained that Aaron was in very deed his "called," or chosen one. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod; . . . write thou every man's name upon his rod. And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi; for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers. And it shall come to pass, that *the man's rod, whom I shall choose*, shall blossom." And they did so. "And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, *the rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi was budded*, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds!" (Num. xvii. 1-11).

Then was Aaron's rod brought again before the testimony "*to be kept* for a token against the rebels," a lasting memorial that he was "*called* of God."

CHRIST THE CHOSEN HIGH PRIEST OF GOD.

VER. 5, 6. "SO ALSO CHRIST GLORIFIED NOT HIMSELF TO BE MADE AN HIGH PRIEST; BUT HE THAT SAID UNTO HIM, THOU ART MY SON, TO-DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE. AS HE SAITH ALSO IN ANOTHER PLACE, THOU ART A PRIEST FOR EVER, AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC."

Most truthfully could Jesus say, "I seek not mine own glory," no, not even in being the chosen high priest of God. He "glorified not himself," but He chose him who said unto him, "*Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.*" "Thou"—not others; here is a choice and selection, "*Thee,*" my only begotten Son!

Out of the boundless universe of creation, God fixed on "One" alone, "*One chosen out of the people,*" (Ps. lxxxix. 19). One in whom his soul delighted, his "elect" one, (Isa. xlii. 1), his well-beloved Son, that *he* should be to him "*a priest for ever.*" "*Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.*"

Many have felt a difficulty in discovering the appropriateness of this quotation from the 2d Psalm, in reference to the priesthood of Jesus. But there seems to be very peculiar beauty in it, viewed in connexion with the choice of Aaron. For what was it in the laying up of the rods before the Lord, that proved Aaron to be the man of God's choice?

It was that *his* rod "blossomed." All the rods were in themselves as dead sticks, but in Aaron's rod there were evident signs of life out of death, *of resurrection*

life. Aaron's rod "*budded and brought forth buds,*" (Num. xvii. 5, 8). The idea is essentially that of creation or generation, for both these words in the Hebrew, are applied either to the productions of the earth, or the offspring of man; and when it is said, "This day have I *begotten* thee," the idea is *the very same*. And we know from Acts xiii. 32-37, that these words in the 2d Psalm are designed of God to refer to *the resurrection* of Jesus; "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, *in that* he hath *raised up Jesus* again; *as it is also written in the second Psalm,* Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Just as Aaron was declared to be the man of God's choice in the matter of the priesthood, by the signs of resurrection life in his rod which budded while all the other rods remained dead, so is Jesus declared to be the chosen one of God, his great high priest, the antitype of Aaron, "by the resurrection from the dead," or, as it might have been rendered, "from among the dead ones," (Rom. i. 4).

"Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." Oh, how wondrous, and how precious is the risen life of Jesus as our great high priest! It tells us that he was the Chosen One of God. It tells us that God "glorified" him, yea, conferred an "honour" upon him in making him his high priest! These are deeply precious truths to the souls that love to share God's joys in his

beloved Son. Oh to be more occupied with the Word of God, and all that it reveals to us of Jesus! God the Father glories in him, and proclaims it from the heavens that all the world may hear, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," (Matt. iii. 17). "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee."

And again, "*Thou* art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." God's chosen one, Jesus, is remarkably set forth in the 110th Psalm. He first gives him *a station* of pre-eminence; "Sit *thou* at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool," (ver. 1). Then he gives him pre-eminence in power and rule; "The Lord shall send the rod of *thy* strength out of Zion: rule *thou* in the midst of thine enemies," (ver. 2). Then he promises to him pre-eminence in the multitude of his followers; "*Thy* people shall be willing in the day of *thy* power, in the beauties of holiness more than the womb of the morning: *thou* shalt have the dew of thy youth," (ver. 3, margin). And lastly, he asserts his pre-eminence as a priest; "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, *Thou* art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," (ver. 4).

It is Jehovah speaking to Adonai: "The Lord said unto my Lord." Nothing can exceed the solemnity of such a scene in the world above. We can imagine the heavenly hosts to fall prostrate at the feet of Jesus in lowliest adoration, as they heard such language addressed to him by the great Jehovah. Never was any creature

in the boundless universe advanced to such a dignity as this heretofore. It is God the Father, glorifying his Son Jesus; and its language to us is this, "*Behold . . . mine elect in whom my soul delighteth,*" (Isa. xlii. 1).

JESUS, A HIGH PRIEST COMPASSED WITH SINLESS
INFIRMITY.

VER. 7, 8. "WHO IN THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH, WHEN HE HAD OFFERED UP PRAYERS AND SUPPLICATIONS, WITH STRONG CRYING AND TEARS, UNTO HIM THAT WAS ABLE TO SAVE HIM FROM (OR OUT OF) DEATH, AND WAS HEARD IN THAT HE FEARED: THOUGH HE WERE A SON, YET LEARNED HE OBEDIENCE BY THE THINGS WHICH HE SUFFERED."

It was not the blood of literal lambs that Jesus offered as a high priest, nor the literal "incense" upon the golden altar, but the realities of which these things were the symbols. "Prayers and supplications"—these were his offerings, ascending up to God with a fragrance sweeter far than we can conceive through the dimness of the type, "*sweet*" though the incense ever was, (Exod. xxx. 7, 9, 34).

"Prayers and supplications," both words imply a consciousness of want, a felt sense of need, so that both bring the Lord Jesus before us as a high priest compassed with frailty, or sinless infirmity. And that he should thus pray to One "able to save him," strongly teaches us also that viewed as *man*, in "*flesh*," he was unable to save himself. It gives us a wondrous view of the humanity of Jesus.

Much difficulty has been felt regarding these "prayers and supplications" to be saved from death, for they have generally been supposed to refer to the prayers of Gethsemane. But it has been beautifully remarked, "The expression rendered *from* death, is in the original, *out of* death. And prayer to be *saved out of death*, is prayer to be *raised from the dead*. The mercy of resurrection was with Jesus a matter of positive promise, and the fulfilment of this promise was, no doubt, the object of these prayers and supplications, this strong crying and tears. . . . He prays in the 6th Psalm, 'O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy sore displeasure. Return, O Lord, deliver my soul; O *save me* for thy mercies' sake.' Here is a prayer to One who was 'able to save him.' And if we ask from what he desired salvation, we have our answer in the words that follow, 'For *in death* there is no remembrance of thee; in *the grave* who shall give thee thanks? All the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch *with my tears*.' Tears then mingled with this prayer. Again, in the 30th Psalm, the Saviour addresses the Father, 'I *cried* to thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made *supplication*. What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to *the pit*? Shall *the dust* praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?' Now the pit is the grave, and the mercy which is implored in this supplication is evidently resurrection from the dust of death." (Tait's Exposition of the Hebrews, vol. i. pp. 373, 376.)

So in the 22d Psalm, we read, "Why art thou so far from helping me, and *from the words of my roaring?*" And in the 69th Psalm, "*Save* me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of *my crying*. *Let me not sink*," &c. (ver. 1-17). How deeply solemn to think of those prayers and tears of Jesus, ascending to his Father like the "sweet incense" from the tabernacle of his body "in the days of his flesh." These were his offerings, his "sacerdotal offerings." And they shew us much of the spiritual reality of what took place in type under the Aaronic priesthood.

But there were other tokens of his sinless infirmity than his "prayers and supplications," and "strong crying and tears." There was beside all this a life-time of sinless *suffering*. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he *suffered*." "It pleased the Lord to *bruise* him; he hath put him to *grief*. He was *wounded*. He was *bruised*. The *chastisement* of our peace was upon him; and with his *stripes* we are healed. He was *oppressed*, and he was *afflicted*," &c. (Isa. liii.). "I gave my back to *the smiters*, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from *shame* and *spitting*," (Isa. l. 6). "His visage was so *marred* more than any man," &c. &c. (Isa. lii. 14). What an accumulation of words to unfold to us something of the full variety of his sufferings. Well

might he forewarn his disciples of the "*many things*" which he must suffer! (Luke ix. 22; xvii. 25).

"He suffered being tempted," (chap. ii. 18). He suffered though he did "well." He suffered and threatened not, (1 Pet. ii. 19-24). "I am *afflicted* and ready to die from my youth up," did he not say? "While *I suffer thy terrors* I am distracted," (Ps. lxxxviii. 15). And he endured at last—"the *suffering of death*," (Heb. ii. 9). "The things which he suffered."

And why suffered he these "*many things*?"—it was that by them he might learn obedience, not doing his own but his Father's will. How vividly it is all brought before us in the sufferings of that night in Gethsemane—the *Son* learning obedience to *the Father* through the sufferings he was enduring. "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: *nevertheless* not what I will, but what thou wilt," (Mark xiv. 33-36). What holy voluntary obedience!

But oh! how wonderful it is to think of Jesus learning obedience through sufferings. Believer, do you ever wonder why you have been called to tread a path of so much agonising suffering! Oh ponder these words concerning Jesus, and you will cease to wonder that a member of his body should be so much conformed to his image. The 50th chapter of Isaiah lets us into much of the feelings of his own mind on this deeply mysterious subject. "The Lord God hath given me," he says, "the tongue of the learned," (literally "of the disciples"),

that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary : he wakeneth morning by morning ; he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned," or rather, "as the disciples ;" and it might be rendered, "to *obey* as the disciples." "The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back," &c. (ver. 4, 5, 6). These are words replete with interest, falling as they do from the lips of the Son of God, "I was not rebellious." It is the Son *learning obedience*, and learning it through suffering, for he adds, "I gave my back to the smiters," &c. This *learning*, too, is full of meaning, for the Hebrew word comes from a root, signifying "to learn, to teach, or to habituate as the ox is accustomed or broken to the yoke." And it was precisely thus that Jesus (as pre-eminently *the* man after God's own heart) prayed to be taught. When he so often says, "*Teach* me thy statutes," "*teach* me thy judgments," &c., this is the very word he uses, (Ps. cxix. 12, 26, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135 ; xxv. 4, 5).

He "*learnt* obedience" under the Father's own training, that he might be God's perfect *priest* ; and not as a child needing the rod lest he should die (Prov. xxiii. 13, 14), it was as the merciful and faithful high priest, who, having suffered himself, could succour the tempted ones ; having been "weary" himself, could speak words in season to the "weary." Therefore it is said, "*Though* he were a Son, yet learned he obedience ;" it was the wonder of eternity that the Son of God should

suffer, and be in need, and offer up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to be saved out of *death*. But he "was heard," and he was "made perfect." How beautifully he says, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from (or out of) *death*, mine eyes *from tears*, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord *in the land of the living*," (Ps. cxvi. 1-9). Here is our Melchisedec high priest, raised out of death to walk for ever "in the land of the living;" his sufferings and death proving his manhood, his resurrection to eternal life ("because it was not possible that he should be holden of" death) proving his Godhead. The Son of God, yet notwithstanding, learning obedience through sufferings, as Son of man.

Another lesson of extreme value to the deeply tried and harassed believer may be gathered from the 7th and 8th verses. For do they not say that Jesus prayed, and that Jesus was heard, and yet that he learned "obedience by the things which he suffered?" It is no proof that prayer is disregarded, because the suffering is prolonged. When he *had* prayed, "*yet* learned he obedience."

THE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS CONTRASTED WITH THE
PRIESTHOOD OF AARON.

VER. 9, 10. "AND BEING MADE PERFECT, HE BECAME THE AUTHOR
OF ETERNAL SALVATION UNTO ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM;
CALLED OF GOD AN HIGH PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MEL-
CHISEDEC."

"Being made perfect." Ah! this was true of no high priest but Jesus. But "it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation *perfect* through sufferings," (chap. ii. 10).

He is "made perfect:" he is "declared to be the Son of God with power by the *resurrection* from the dead," (Rom. i. 4). In his message to Herod, he himself refers to his resurrection as the perfecting point of all: "Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the *third* day *I shall be perfected*," (Luke xiii. 32). For it was in raising him from the dead, that God the Father bore his testimony to the perfectness of his Son. He "*declared*" thereby that he was "the Son of God." And but for his resurrection, even his death had been in vain. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain," (1 Cor. xv. 14).

"*Being made perfect*, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Just as in the type, it came to pass that, "Behold the rod

of Aaron *for the house of Levi* was budded," so when Jesus rose, it was as "the first-fruits of them that slept," (1 Cor. xv. 20, with Num. xvii. 8). The word Levi signifies "joined:" ("they shall be *joined* unto thee," &c., Num. xviii. 2, 4); therefore the budding of Aaron's rod was not for himself alone, but for "the house of Levi" with him. How beautifully this sets forth Jesus, as becoming through his rising to life again, "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him!" For what is "eternal salvation," but eternal deliverance out of death? His resurrection is the cause of ours, even as the rod of Aaron budded "for the house of Levi."

Are we, then, the disciples of Jesus? are we "joined" unto him as branches in the vine? Do we take his yoke upon us and *learn* of him? There is no salvation "without holiness." "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey* him." If we are risen with him, it *must* be to "walk in newness of life," (Rom. vi. 1-6).

He first became "obedient unto *death*" (Phil. ii. 8), and then being "perfected" in his *resurrection*, he blossomed, and brought forth fruit, which shall in due time "fill the face of the world with fruit!" "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, *it bringeth forth much fruit*," (John xii. 24; Isa. liii. 10, xxvii. 6). "*Many* sons," (Heb. ii. 10).

Oh, how great the pre-eminence of Jesus over all the priests of Aaron's line! Death having no more dominion over him, he is "a priest *for ever*," able to give "*eternal* salvation" to all that obey him. In other words, he is "called of God* an high priest *after the order of Melchisedec!*" (ver. 10).

* This word "called" is altogether different from that in verse 4. There it signified choice or selection. Here, it has its derivation from the delivery of a speech in a market-place, implying "*to declare publicly*," and in this sense it agrees beautifully with the solemn declaration of Jehovah in the 110th Psalm, where the Hebrew word rendered "The Lord *said* unto my Lord," is properly "to affirm or pronounce solemnly."

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST AN HIGH PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF
MELCHISEDEC.

HEB. v. 11-14; vi. vii.

THE ultimate object the Apostle has in view throughout the 6th and 7th chapters, and these latter verses of the 5th, is to unfold the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ in all its perfection, as contrasted with the imperfections of the Aaronic. But other subjects are introduced, and especially the giving of the "*Promises*" to Abraham, as if to remind them that they were overlooking the earlier and better thing (Gal. iii. 16-19), in the "added" and later thing of *the law*. There is also a solemn warning about rejecting Jesus, and encouragement to such as are "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the *promises*." The subject now to be examined is principally introductory, viz., Chap. V. 11-14, and VI.

THE PERFECT AND THE IMPERFECT.

CHAP. V. 11-14; and VI. 1 (part). "OF WHOM (*i.e.* OF MELCHISEDEC) WE HAVE MANY THINGS TO SAY, AND HARD TO BE UTTERED, SEEING YE ARE DULL OF HEARING. FOR WHEN FOR THE TIME YE OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS, YE HAVE NEED THAT ONE TEACH YOU AGAIN WHICH BE THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE ORACLES OF GOD; AND ARE BECOME SUCH AS HAVE NEED OF MILK, AND NOT

OF STRONG MEAT. FOR EVERY ONE THAT USETH MILK IS UNSEILFUL IN THE WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; FOR HE IS A BABE. BUT STRONG MEAT BELONGETH TO THEM THAT ARE OF FULL AGE, EVEN THOSE WHO BY REASON OF USE HAVE THEIR SENSES EXERCISED TO DISCERN BOTH GOOD AND EVIL. THEREFORE, LEAVING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, LET US GO ON UNTO PERFECTION.

In the verses immediately preceding these (See Chap. V. 9, 10), St Paul had spoken of Jesus as the "Perfect" One, "called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec." And he would fain have gone on at once to shew them the great and glorious things that Melchisedec's history was fitted to unfold to them concerning Jesus,—but alas! they were like babes that must be fed with milk, so unable were they to comprehend the glorious tidings he was yearning to declare to them.

And oh! what a picture he has drawn in these verses of the multitude of professing Christians in the present day! How very many content themselves with reading through a chapter in the Bible, as any indifferent person would walk along the road, carelessly admiring the scenery on either side; but how *few* enter into the deeper delights with which a botanist would examine every leaf or petal, or the geologist the very earth he treads upon. How grievously content the many are with that vague and scanty knowledge of Jesus, which loses sight of all the ten thousand minute particulars recorded of him in the Word, so precious, so fragrant,

so full of exquisite beauty to the eye and heart of God. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith," (Rev. ii. iii., a seven-times repeated exhortation). "That we henceforth be no more children," (Eph. iv. 14). "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I *put away* childish things," (1 Cor. xiii. 11). There must be a *following on* to know the Lord, (Hos. vi. 3. The word in the original is used also for the pursuit of an enemy in battle, implying real effort).

Where are the Christians who spend even the same number of hours in the day in nourishing and cherishing their immortal souls, as in feeding the perishing body? Can we wonder, then, that we are "babes," weak, and "unskilful in the word of righteousness," instead of being well "exercised" *like wrestlers* (for such is the force of the word in the original), "to discern both good and evil," and to partake of the strong meat which belongs to the "*perfect*" ones? (See ver. 14, margin). Oh to be "dull of hearing" no longer! "These things ought not so to be," (James iii. 10).

Onward, Christians, onward go.

"Let us go on," rather "let us *be carried on* unto perfection." "The word is emphatical, intimating such a kind of progress as a ship makes when it is under sail. 'Let us be carried on,'—that is, with the full bent of our minds and affections, with the utmost en-

deavours of our whole souls. We have abode long enough by the shore ; let us now point our sails, and launch forth into the deep." (Owen).

"Let us be carried on *unto perfection*." How greatly some have perplexed themselves about this "perfection,"—as if the Apostle had meant that a state of sinless perfection were attainable *in Christians* while on earth. Many a heart has been caused to ache by seeking a perfection within itself, never, never to be found there, while others have rushed into the opposite extreme, and rejected the idea of "perfection" altogether ; not in themselves alone (where God has *not* put it), but even overlooking it where he *has* put it. For there is One in whom "perfection" is found : and oh ! is it not because we have so little believed what God has told us of the "perfection" there is in him for us, that we have so little peace ? May the Lord shew this "perfection" to many troubled souls, to their great and endless comfort !

For this perfection is *in Jesus*, not in us. It is Jesus who is "made perfect," (Chap. v. 9). It is Jesus who is "perfected for evermore," (Chap. vii. 28, margin). It is Jesus who is "become an high priest of good things to come by a greater and more *perfect* tabernacle," &c. (Chap. ix. 11). It is Jesus who is the Captain of our salvation made "*perfect* through sufferings," (Chap. ii. 10). And it is Jesus who by one offering "hath *perfected* for ever them that are sanctified," (Chap. x. 1).

This is the "perfection" to which the Apostle would have us "go on." Oh that we knew it better!

Nothing can possibly be more striking than the contrast he has drawn in this Epistle, between this perfection in Jesus, and the imperfections of the law. Thus, in chap. ix. 8, 9, we read of the tabernacle, that it was "a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that *could not* make him that did the service perfect," &c.

Again, "the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, *can never*, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect," (Chap. x. 1).

In chap. vii. 11, "If, therefore, perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise?" &c.

And again, "There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. *For the law made nothing perfect*," (Chap. vii. 18, 19).

"Let us go on unto perfection," not resting in the law, ("not laying again the foundation," &c.); but following on to know the Lord. Oh for a *deeper* entrance into the heart of Christ!

“THE FIRST PRINCIPLES,” OR WHAT THE LAW COULD
TEACH.

VER. 1, 2. “NOT LAYING AGAIN THE FOUNDATION OF REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS, AND OF FAITH TOWARD GOD, OF THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS, AND OF LAYING ON OF HANDS, AND OF RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND OF ETERNAL JUDGMENT.”

Of these “first principles of the oracles of God,” the Apostle mentions six, all of them being fundamental articles of the Jewish faith. For what but “repentance from dead works” was the burden of God’s messages by his servants the prophets in old time? “*Repent, and turn yourselves* from all your transgressions, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezek. xviii. 23, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32). “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked *turn from his* evil way and live: *turn ye, turn ye* from your evil ways; for why *will ye die*, O house of Israel?” (Ezek. xxxiii. 11; comp. also 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13, or Jonah iii. 5–10: Manasseh and the Ninevites repenting); whilst we know that when John the Baptist was sent to “prepare the way” for the first coming of Christ, it was to be by a preaching of “*the baptism of repentance*,” (Mark i. 1–4).

Then as to “faith toward God,” the Apostle declares in the eleventh chapter of this Epistle, that the time would fail him to tell of the instances of it from the beginning: Abraham, Noah, David, &c.

"The doctrine of baptisms" has frequently puzzled Christian commentators. Owen writes, "There occurs no small difficulty from the use of the word *baptisms* in the plural number. For it is not anywhere else in the Scripture so used when the baptism of the gospel is intended," but, he adds, "the Jewish washings are often so expressed." The same plural word, though differently rendered, occurs in chap. ix. 10. "Meats and drinks, and divers *washings*, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." "Divers washings" *i. e.* baptisms. "The doctrine of baptisms," doubtless included all the different "washings" imposed on Israel of old. The washing of the priests for their consecration-day, (Lev. viii. 6); the washing of their hands and feet every day, (Exod. xl 30-32); the washing of any garment, or anything of skins wherein the plague had been, but which proved to be free from leprosy, (Lev. xiii. 53-59); the washing of the cleansed leper, (Lev. xiv. 8, 9); the washing of the animals offered in sacrifice, (Lev. i. 9, &c., &c.); or the washing of any clothes or vessels with "the water of separation," after the touching of a dead body, or a bone, or a grave, (Num. xix.), with many other similar instances. It tells of *the cleanness of heart*, (Ps. li. 10), required by a holy God who would have us *thoroughly washed* from our iniquity.

There was also the doctrine "of laying on of hands," which was a rite common among the Jews for the set-

ting apart of any one to sacred purposes. "Thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord, and the children of Israel shall *put their hands* upon the Levites, &c., that they may execute the service of the Lord," (Num. viii. 9, 10). "The Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and *lay thine hand* upon him. And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded," (Num. xxvii. 18-23; Deut. xxxiv. 9).

Then there was the doctrine of the "resurrection of the dead." "That the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," &c. (Luke xx. 37, 38). And David wrote concerning it, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption," (Ps. xvi. 9, 10). And Isaiah wrote, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise And the earth shall cast out the dead," (Isa. xxvi. 19). And Daniel wrote, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake," (Dan. xii. 2). And to this day, the thirteenth article of the Jewish creed is "the revivification or resurrection of the dead." The Sadducees only *disbelieved* it.

Lastly, there was the doctrine "of eternal judgment." It was of this Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute *judgment* upon all," &c.

(Jude 14, 15). And the Psalms make constant mention of it. "The Lord shall endure for ever; he hath prepared his throne for judgment; and he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness," &c. &c. (Ps. ix. 3-8, 15, 16; Ps. l. 4, 5; Ps. lxxvi. 7-10, &c.). And Daniel vividly describes it, in Dan. vii. 9, &c.

All these were important parts of God's truth, yea, "the principles of the doctrine of *Christ*" were in them. But when *Christ himself* was come, there was something better than "first principles" for the hungry soul to be fed upon. Let us then leave "the principles" to attach ourselves to *the living person*!

FALLING AWAY—(THE WARNING.)

VER. 3-6. "AND THIS WILL WE DO, IF GOD PERMIT. FOR IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO WERE ONCE ENLIGHTENED, AND HAVE TASTED OF THE HEAVENLY GIFT, AND WERE MADE PARTAKERS OF THE HOLY GHOST, AND HAVE TASTED THE GOOD WORD OF GOD, AND THE POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME, IF THEY SHALL FALL AWAY, TO RENEW THEM AGAIN UNTO REPENTANCE; SEEING THEY CRUCIFY TO THEMSELVES THE SON OF GOD AFRESH, AND PUT HIM TO AN OPEN SHAME."

That these words have a *primary* reference to the leaving behind of the first principles of Judaism, for the going on unto the perfection that is in Christ Jesus, is quite clear from the way in which they are connected with the verses immediately preceding. "This will we

do, if God permit. FOR it is impossible," &c. *i.e.* not laying again the foundation already laid, we will "*go on unto perfection.*" For if a professing Hebrew Christian turned his back upon Christ, to go "again to the weak and beggarly elements" of Jewish bondage, he did in spirit as truly crucify afresh the Son of God, as if with his own hands he had nailed his body to the tree! (Gal. iv. 9). How solemn to see the light in which our acts appear in the eyes of God and in the sight of angels! We think it hurts no one but ourselves if we reject the Son of God, but God views it as an open insult done before men and angels—"an *open shame!*" How intensely this will be *felt* in that day when the "great white throne" is set, and "the dead, small and great, stand before God," to be "*judged every man according to their works!*" (Rev. xx. 11-13). Oh, how fearful is the sin of rejecting Jesus!

But if the warning applied primarily to the professing Hebrew Christians, it applies with equal, nay with greater, force, to professing Christians now. For although many did fall away from the faith of Jesus even in the Apostle's own day, he declares solemnly, that "evil men and seducers shall wax *worse and worse*, deceiving, and being deceived," (2 Tim. iii. 13). For "in the last days perilous times shall come." For "the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall *depart from the faith,*" (1 Tim. iv. 1). There shall come "*a falling away!*" (2 Thess. ii. 3).

Never, never were these warnings needed so much as now. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," is emphatically the characteristic of the religion of the many, and it is a sign of the "perilous times" of the last days, (2 Tim. iii. 1-5). Therefore, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," (1 Cor. x. 12). "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, *fall* from your own steadfastness." "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness," (not to have been "once enlightened," &c.) "than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them," (2 Peter iii. 17, and ii. 20, 21). "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die," (Ezek. xviii. 24-26). There is such a thing as forsaking the Lord. "The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he

will be found of thee; but if thou *forsake him*, he will cast *thee* off for ever," (1 Chron. xxviii. 9, &c.).

The very term "*forsake him*," implies that there had formerly been a walking or holding with him; as it is written in 1 John ii. 19, "*They went out from us*, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they *went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." The former *apparent* friendship and companionship is abandoned; there is "a falling away."

It is not indeed the falling from our "first love" of which Jesus warned the church at Ephesus that St Paul here intends. (See Rev. ii. 4, 5). *That* was declension and might be repented of. But this is apostasy; the very word implies it. It is the word used by the Apostle in Rom. xi. 11, "have they stumbled that they should *fall*?" where, as Owen justly remarks, the falling away of which Paul speaks in Heb. vi. 6, (for it is the same word), is put in immediate contrast to the *stumbling* from which they could be recovered. No—it is the stony ground hearers in our Lord's parable of the sower, that St Paul is here describing. "These have no root which for a while believe, and in time of temptation *fall away*," (Luke vii. 13). For such as Jude spoke of, "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord *having saved* the people out of Egypt, *afterward destroyed* them that believed not," (Jude 5).

Perhaps there never was a more striking illustration of it than in the case of Nadab and Abihu. "They *saw* the God of Israel," when they went up to him in the mount with Moses and Aaron, and the seventy elders; "also they saw God, and did eat and drink!" (Exod. xxiv. 9-11). It was more than illumination, or being "once enlightened;" it was to all appearance realised communion, a *tasting* of the good gifts of God. And yet they perished awfully, as did Judas afterwards.

It is quite possible then to fall away, after there has been every appearance of having made a true profession of Christianity. "From that time many of his disciples *went back*, and walked no more with him," (John vi. 66, 67).

When any turn from Zion's way,
(Alas, what numbers do!)
Methinks I hear my Saviour say,
Wilt *thou* forsake me too?

NEWTON.

"Let us search and try our hearts." It is not difficult to discover whether the secret spring is there, whence the stream of holy affection gushes forth which proves the existence of a well of living water within. That secret spring is a *deep-rooted and sincere attachment to the person of Jesus*. Only once is he named throughout this passage, and there it is to tell of *deadly hatred to the Son of God!* Can we wonder that this should lie at the root of falling away?

VER. 7, 8. "FOR THE EARTH, WHICH DRINKETH IN THE RAIN THAT COMETH OFT UPON IT, AND BRINGETH FORTH HERBS MEET FOR THEM BY WHOM IT IS DRESSED, RECEIVETH BLESSING FROM GOD: BUT THAT WHICH BEARETH THORNS AND BRIARS IS REJECTED, AND IS NIGH UNTO CURSING; WHOSE END IS TO BE BURNED."

"By their fruits ye shall know them," (Matt. vii. 20). The fruitful soil "receiveth blessing," but the barren soil is "nigh unto cursing:" as in John xv. 2, 6, "Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit;" but, "if a man *abide not* in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

The illustration would be peculiarly forcible to the Hebrews, for with them the fertility of their land depended mainly on the regular supply of the early and latter rain, (Deut. xi. 13-17; Lev. xxvi. 4; Joel ii. 23, 24; Ezek. xxxiv. 26). And when Isaiah foretold the rejection of the Lord's vineyard, it was in these striking words, "There shall come up briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it," (Isa. v. 1-6). "Some fell *upon a rock*; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture," (Luke viii. 6, 13).

"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire," (Matt. vii. 19). "Whose end is to be burned." What manner of fruit can be expected from the hard and stony heart which has never been broken, and from which the rain of the

Spirit runs off as from the surface of a rock? It has no feeling, it cannot, will not love.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT.

VER. 9, 10. "BUT, BELOVED, WE ARE PERSUADED BETTER THINGS OF YOU, AND THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION, THOUGH WE THUS SPEAK. FOR GOD IS NOT UNRIGHTEOUS, TO FORGET YOUR WORK AND LABOUR OF LOVE, WHICH YE HAVE SHEWED TOWARD HIS NAME, IN THAT YE HAVE MINISTERED TO THE SAINTS, AND DO MINISTER."

"Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." Therefore, ye shall know them by their fruits," (Matt. vii. 15, 16). And "the fruit of the Spirit is love," &c. (Gal. v. 22, 23). Their "work and labour of love" in ministering to the saints for the sake of Christ, was the plain and evident proof in these Hebrew Christians that they were *not* falling away. Paul *knew* them by their fruits. He was "persuaded better things" of them, yea, *saving* things, "things that accompany salvation." For "love is of God." This "labour of love" was a spark from the strong and active love of God, just as the deadly enmity of those who could "crucify the Son of God afresh" came from him who is "a murderer from the beginning" (1 John iii. 7, 8; John viii. 44).

How fearful to be "set on fire of hell"—how blessed to be consumed as living sacrifices in the "vehement flame" of love which is strong as death! It may cost us much toilsome "labour," but the "labour of love" is sweet. Oh for a seraph's burning love to Christ—

love to Christ within the veil, and love to Christ in the suffering members of his body on the earth. For we know how he tests the sincerity of our love when we say with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love *Thee*," bidding us prove it by feeding his sheep and his lambs, (John xxi. 15-17).

There is no such proof of our sincerity as this. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," (1 John iii. 14). It is the very way in which God has proved the sincerity of *his* love. "Hereby *perceive* we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." "In this was *manifested* the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him," (1 John iii. 16; iv. 9).

If one may so speak with reverence, God has made manifest the sincerity of his professions of love, in the very same way in which he would have us manifest ours, even by *ministering to the saints*! And so St Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet *for your sakes* he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich," urging this as a motive why they also should prove *their* love by ministering to the saints in a time of need. "Therefore, as ye abound in everything, &c., see that ye abound in *this* grace also;" and why? "*to prove the sincerity* of your love," (2 Cor. viii. 1-9; comp. Eph. iv. 15, marg., and 16). "There-

fore," writes St John, "let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in *deed*, &c. (1 John iii. 16-18). "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God," (1 John iv. 7).

Their "work and labour of love" was plainly, then, sufficient evidence on the part of the Hebrews, that they were true-hearted converts, stedfast in the faith, and abounding in the work of the Lord, (1 Cor. xv. 58). Nor was it Paul alone that thought so: he says distinctly, "*God* is not unrighteous" to forget it. Not a cup of cold water can be given for the sake of Christ, without its due reward from him who is never "unrighteous to forget" (Matt. x. 42); for it proves our love to the name of Jesus. "Your work and labour of love which ye have shewed toward his name."

But the most important evidence of all, in the special connexion in which this passage stands, lies in the one word "do" minister. It had been a small thing in their favour that they had ministered once, if now they had grown weary and left it off. True, indeed, the Apostle had stood in doubt of them. "It is good to be zealously affected *always* in a good thing," does he not write to the Galatians, "and not only when I am present with you;" "ye *did* run well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?" (Gal. iv. 18, v. 7). But to the Hebrews he could say, "Ye have ministered to the saints *and* DO minister." Whilst our conversa-

tion is such as becometh the gospel of Christ, and whilst we are bearing fruit, some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold, we have what is to us "*an evident token* of salvation, and that of God," (Phil. i. 27, 28).

The Apostle, therefore, so far from intending to say one word of discouragement to any sincere believers in the fearful warning he had just given, offers them, one and all, the most cheering and satisfactory evidence of their safety.

ENDURING "UNTO THE END."

VER. 11, 12. "AND WE DESIRE THAT EVERY ONE OF YOU DO SHEW THE SAME DILIGENCE, TO THE FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE UNTO THE END: THAT YE BE NOT SLOTHFUL, BUT FOLLOWERS OF THEM WHO THROUGH FAITH AND PATIENCE INHERIT THE PROMISES."

"The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall *also finish it*." "For who hath despised the day of small things?" "He shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shouting, crying, Grace, grace unto it," (Zech. iv. 7-10). "The Lord will *perfect* that which concerneth me," (Ps. cxxxviii. 8). "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will *perform it* until the day of Jesus Christ," (Phil. i. 6); that is, he will "bring it to an end," it shall be carried on unto perfec-

tion. For such is ever God's way. "His work is perfect," (Deut. xxxii. 4).

And he would have us likewise to "go on unto perfection," never resting satisfied with the imperfect thing. He would have us "give all diligence" even "to the full assurance of hope *unto the end*." For, "the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto *the end*, the same shall be saved," (Matt. xxiv. 12, 13). "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope *to the end*, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. i. 13). Let there be no stopping short, no falling away, but rather that overcoming and keeping of God's works unto the end, which secures the promised reward of Jesus at his coming, (Rev. ii. 25-28; 1 Cor. i. 4-9). But to endure to the end is no light or easy thing. It is attained only "through faith and patience;" and the great sustaining principle is hope. Indeed the same original word is sometimes rendered hope, sometimes patience, and sometimes waiting. Hope in Scripture language conveys none of that vague idea of uncertainty which we so commonly attach to it; it is rather "a *certain* assured expectation of good things promised." The "hope" spoken of in Scripture is therefore a great source of joy and strength, for "hope maketh not ashamed," (Rom. v. 1-5). On the contrary, it carries us through the most formidable adversities and distresses. "We are saved by hope," writes the Apostle,

literally, "we are *upheld*" or preserved alive by hope, as the word has been rendered. And not ourselves only, but the whole creation along with us, "*in hope*" wait for the time of deliverance, (Rom. viii. 20-25). It was thus David stirred himself up to "*hope*," when his soul was sore cast down and disquieted within him, (Ps. xlii. 5, 11). And Abraham amidst circumstances the most discouraging that could be, "*against hope believed in hope*," (Rom. iv. 18). And the Thessalonians carried on their "work of faith and labour of love" through their "*patience of hope*," (1 Thess. i. 3). Therefore "be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord," (Ps. xxxi. 24). Yea, like a tree full of living freshness, planted by the rivers of waters, with every leaf green, and yielding its fruit in due season, shall that man be "whose hope the Lord is," (Jer. xvii. 7, 8). There shall be no such thing as falling away, but contrariwise, a continual abiding in Christ. "I will hope *continually*," does not the Psalmist say? (Ps. lxxi. 14), even with "the full assurance of hope unto the end." Thrice "blessed" such a man. For it is much to have "the full assurance of understanding," the mind being fully assured of the truth of divine mysteries, (Col. ii. 2). And it is much to have the "full assurance of faith," being satisfied with Jesus and his finished work, (Heb. x. 22). But it is more than this to have the "full assurance of hope," this is nothing less than to be looking forward con-

fidently with a hope that "maketh not ashamed," to the realisation of all that is *made* ours by faith, and *known* to be ours by "the full assurance of understanding." How much faith in Jesus we need to have, to attain to this "full assurance of hope!" and what a growing knowledge of the Father, and of Christ, and of all the precious things promised in the Word, in order that hope may be excited, and kindled, and kept alive in the soul, till it reaches "*full assurance!*"

Without it, we must journey on but languidly. Without it, we shall be, "*slothful,*" and "*dull of hearing.*" But without it, we may follow on in the steps of those who "believed in hope," and were not ashamed, but even now "*inherit the promises.*"

"THE PROMISES."

VER. 13, 14. "FOR WHEN GOD MADE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM, BECAUSE HE COULD SWEAR BY NO GREATER, HE SWORE BY HIMSELF, SAYING, SURELY BLESSING I WILL BLESS THEE, AND MULTIPLYING I WILL MULTIPLY THEE."

"The promises!" "exceeding great and precious" are they, (2 Pet. i. 4). The Apostle had just spoken of those who inherit them, and the mention of them leads him off to one of the most precious and instructive parts of the whole Epistle. It is the contrast between the constant sense of failure involved in the imperfection of the law, and the "strong consolation" provided by the promises for all who trust in their perfection. For the

"strong consolation" here set before us, is ours emphatically, as "the heirs of promise." "The children of the promise are counted for the seed," (Rom. ix. 8). It is not by the law that we are made "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," but by the *promise*. "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the *law* be heirs, faith is made void, and the *promise made of none effect*," &c. (Rom. iv. 13-21). It is a matter in which the law has no power of interference whatsoever. It can neither give the promise, nor take it away. For "*to Abraham* and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, *cannot disannul*, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God *gave it to Abraham by promise*," (Gal. iii. 16-18).

This is the blessed security of the "heirs of promise." It was in the mind of God from the beginning, to give us salvation in Christ, entirely independent of anything we could do to merit it, and entirely independent of anything we could do to forfeit it. Therefore the law cannot interfere with it, for the law was an "*added*" thing, to last only *until* "the seed should come to

whom the promise was made," (Gal. iii. 19). The promise was before the law, and the promise remains when the law vanishes away. Oh, it is a wondrous privilege to be an heir of promise! Abraham, the father of the faithful, was such an one;—"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," (Gal. iii. 29).

"God made promise to Abraham." How much these words tell of divine sovereignty; he chose to promise, and none could hinder. The promise is *given*, and none can make it void. This indeed is a resting-place for faith. We trust the promise of a well-known earthly friend: how much more may we trust the promise of our God: above all, since the very promises themselves are all summed up in Christ Jesus, "for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen!" (2 Cor. i. 20). He is the Alpha and Omega of them all. All was comprehended in that brief saying to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xxii. 18). His seed "was Christ," and Christ is salvation. It was in the faith of this that Toplady sang:—

The terrors of law and of God
With me can have nothing to do;
My Saviour's obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view.
The work which his goodness began,
The arm of his strength will complete;
His promise is Yea and Amen,
And never was forfeited yet.

The Lord gives to all his people to see their entire freedom from the bondage of the law in this respect, and their glorious security as "heirs of promise!" The "promise" is, as it were, made over to us as our property, *our inheritance*.

Let us study diligently the extent of our amazing wealth in this view of it; always remembering that joint-heirship with Jesus involves the suffering first, and then the glory (Rom. viii. 17, 18); only the glory will be such that the suffering is unworthy to be compared with it.

We must be "followers of those who *through faith and patience* inherit the promises," (ver. 15). "And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise."

We are expressly told, in reference to the occasion St Paul is alluding to, of the trial of Abraham's faith, that "God did tempt (i.e. *prove*) Abraham," (Gen. xxii. 1). He put his faith to a severe trial; and this putting of us to the proof forms a large part of our daily earthly discipline. We see it plainly in the typical history of Israel: "The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to *prove* thee," &c. (Deut. viii. 2; it is the same word in the original as in Gen. xxii. 1). See also Exod. xvi. 4; xx. 20; Judges ii. 21, 22; iii. 1-4. There is patient endurance first, and then the obtaining of the promise. Had Abraham's faith failed him on that occasion,

everything had failed ; but we know who it is that intercedes for us, that our "faith fail not." That intercession is real, though unseen and unheard. And in reading the fearful order that God gave to Abraham, we almost tremble in breathless suspense, lest the father's tender affections should prevail, and his faith stagger, for *we* hear not the intercession in heaven that his faith might *not* fail. "God did tempt (or *prove*) Abraham. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest . . . and offer him for a burnt-offering," &c. And Abraham did so, and bound his son, and took the knife to shed his blood ! It was a moment of tremendous import, of terrific suspense. There was in him, however, *no falling away*. He "patiently endured." And the voice from heaven was heard, saying, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord ; for *because* thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son ; that in blessing I will bless thee, &c., *because thou hast obeyed my voice*," (Gen. xxii. 15-18). All seemed to have been suspended on his obedience ! It was not Abraham alone, but Abraham's "seed," nay, the very "promise" itself, that seemed hung on the faith and patience of this one man ! But, having "patiently endured, he obtained the promise,"—*such* a promise as never was made to man before, uttered from the throne of God, and confirmed by the oath of God !

And it was, so to speak, the reward of his obedience

and patient waiting. He waited in the first place, twenty-five years before Isaac was born to him, and twenty years more had elapsed after Isaac's birth ere he obtained this promise, making in all a period of five and forty years of patient endurance. Here is an example for us to imitate.

"It is not a thing quickly tried (writes Owen), whether a man be one that will patiently endure or not." And again, "If there be not difficulties, provocations, and delays in a business, it cannot be known whether a man be 'patient' or not, for he hath no occasion to exercise this longanimity." "Lord, increase our faith."

THE PROMISE CONFIRMED BY THE OATH.

VER. 16, 17. "FOR MEN VERILY SWEAR BY THE GREATER: AND AN OATH FOR CONFIRMATION IS TO THEM AN END OF ALL STRIFE. WHEREIN GOD, WILLING MORE ABUNDANTLY TO SHEW UNTO THE HEIRS OF PROMISE THE IMMUTABILITY OF HIS COUNSEL, CONFIRMED IT BY AN OATH."

There is something perfectly overwhelming in these words; they bring our God before us in so marvellous a light. It is not his love alone, his "great love," that love which gave his Son to die for us while we were enemies, that they celebrate. It is something in addition to this. It is God so giving himself to consider the weakness and fears, the doubts and misgivings of his own people, as to condescend to deal with them, as

they would deal with one another in the settling of some disputed point ! For with men, "an oath for confirmation is an end of all strife," (Gen. xxi. 25-32 ; xxvi. 19-33), &c. And God, willing to settle our minds conclusively and for ever, as to the unchangeableness of his purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord, has given us "an oath for confirmation !"

Shame, shame upon our unbelief that we should ever feel a doubt after this ! Our salvation rests *not* upon our obedience under the law ; it is "in Christ Jesus," the Promised Seed of Abraham. Oh, that we realised this more fully, so as to come to "an end of all strife" between faith and unbelief. The Lord teach us more of his mind.

"For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself." "By *myself* have I sworn, saith the Lord," (Gen. xxii. 16). Oh, how this proclaims the greatness of our God ! "O Lord my God, thou art *very* great," (Ps. civ. 1). There is "no greater." "Behold, I have sworn by my great name saith the Lord," (Jer. xlv. 26). The constant mention of the oath of God throughout his word sufficiently proves its value, and intimates to us, from page to page, what care he has taken for the full rest of our souls in "the immutability of his counsel," (See Exod. xxxii. 13 ; Isa. xlv. 23 ; Jer. xxii. 5 ; xlix. 13). "Because he would *keep the oath*, which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out," &c.

(Deut. vii. 8. Expressions such as these occur no fewer than twenty-seven times in the book of Deuteronomy alone)! See also Gen. xxvi. 3; xxiv. 7; 1 24; Exod. vi. 8; xxxiii. 1; Num. xxxii. 11; Deut. i. 8; vi. 10; xxx. 20; Ps. cv. 42; Mic. vii. 20; Luke i. 73; in all which passages there is direct mention of his oath to Abraham, and we, as Abraham's seed, are deeply interested in every one of them. God is in them, not simply speaking to us, not even making us a "promise" only—but confirming his promise with "an oath!"

This is a very solemn, sacred theme; above all, when we reflect on what it is that leads our "Great God" thus to swear by himself. It is, that he is "*willing more abundantly* to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel." It is all to give us *extra* grounds of comfort! O believer! stand amazed at this. Ponder it till shame has covered your face, and you blush to lift it up at the remembrance of the doubts and misgivings that are ever and anon arising in your mind. Fall down on your knees before your God, and confess the guilt of your unbelief; and be confounded at the dishonour you have cast on the promise and oath of God, by your unbelieving suspicions concerning Jesus.

"More abundantly." The "promise" truly was enough; but he would have us know that in our Father's house there is "enough and to spare!" He fills the cup of promise "to overflowing." This is the

way of him whose very name is El-Shaddai, (Exod. vi. 3), understood by some to signify, "the pourer or shedder forth of blessings." Does he not proclaim himself to be "*abundant* in goodness and truth?" (Exod. xxxiv. 5-7).

Is he not "able to do *exceeding abundantly* above all that we ask or think?" (Eph. iii. 20). His peace "passeth all understanding," (Phil. iv. 7). The joy he gives is "*joy unspeakable*, and full of glory," (1 Pet. i. 8). His "loving-kindness" is "exuberant bounty," (Ps. xxxvi. 10; so the Hebrew word is rendered by some). In short no words can express it, it surpasses all our powers; as David himself acknowledged when he exclaimed, "And what can David say more unto thee? For thy word's sake, *and according to thine own heart*, hast thou done *all these great things*, to make thy servant know them. Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God," &c. (2 Sam. vii. 20-22).

"Willing more abundantly!" it is resolvable only into the immensity of God's exceeding riches of grace. That which God takes pains to "shew unto the heirs of promise," is "the immutability of his counsel." "His counsel." "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever; the thoughts of his heart to all generations," (Ps. xxxiii. 10, 11). "Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth," (Isa. xxv. 1). "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, *My*

counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," (Isa. xlv. 9, 10).

And why does God thus assure and reassure us of "the immutability of his counsel," but to make us know how "*sure*" the promise is to all the seed? (Rom. iv. 16). Why was he "willing more abundantly" to shew it unto us, but that we might "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham," who "staggered not at the promise through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being *fully persuaded*, that what he had promised, he was able to perform," (Rom. iv. 12, 20, 21).

God knew well that ere he could righteously invite us to repose our confidence in him, he must lay for us in Zion "*a sure foundation*;" and has he not "*abundantly*" done it, in giving us his own Son whose name "*shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father?*" &c. (Isa. ix. 6, 7). Truly we may exclaim as we ponder his gift, "This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, which is *wonderful* in counsel, and excellent in working," (Isa. xxviii. 29).

THE HOPE WHICH ENTERS WITHIN THE VEIL.

VER. 18, 19. "THAT BY TWO IMMUTABLE THINGS, IN WHICH IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE, WE MIGHT HAVE A STRONG CONSOLATION, WHO HAVE FLED FOR REFUGE TO LAY HOLD UPON THE HOPE SET BEFORE US: WHICH HOPE WE HAVE AS AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL, BOTH SURE AND STEDFAST, AND WHICH ENTERETH INTO THAT WITHIN THE VEIL."

The apostle has still in view the idea with which he set out in the opening of this chapter, viz., being "carried on unto perfection," with the same kind of progress as a ship makes when it is under sail. This presents the security of true believers in beautiful contrast with what he elsewhere calls making shipwreck of faith, (1 Tim. i. 19). The vessel may indeed be tossed to and fro on the troubled waters, but it shall have "an entrance in full sail into the everlasting kingdom" in due time, (2 Pet. i. 11, original).

The imagery in this passage is extremely beautiful: it seems to have suggested itself to the apostle's mind in connexion with the "hope" of which he speaks. For the Hebrew word *מִקְוָה* involves all these ideas within itself. One verse in the Old Testament beautifully brings them before us: "The Lord will be the *hope* of his people," margin, "*place of repair, or harbour,*" (Joel iii. 16). The word simply denotes taking shelter or refuge; precisely what is here expressed by fleeing for refuge; and to flee for refuge to the hope set before us, is to hope in God, as "*the hope* of his people," to take "refuge" in him as "*our refuge* and strength," (Ps. xli. 1; Ps. ix. 9; Prov. xiv. 26, &c.).

"The hope set before us," is the "desired haven" into which the tempest-tossed children of God are at length safely brought, (Ps. cvii. 26, 30). It is the promised inheritance for which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob "looked," while they "sojourned in the land of promise,

as in a strange country," (Heb. xi. 8-10), desiring "a better country, that is, an heavenly," (ver. 13-16). "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come," (Heb. xiii. 14). It is eternal life, eternal glory. It is all that is in God for us.

And our act of hope is our fleeing unto God for refuge and protection; "In the Lord put I my trust (OR, 'flee I for refuge'): how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" (Ps. xi. 1). It is *laying hold* upon "*the God of hope!*" (Rom. xv. 13; see also Ps. lxxi. 3).

The hope itself is in its very nature so "sure and steadfast," that it is to us "*as an anchor* of the soul," piercing through the heavens to that which is "within the veil." "*Within the veil.*" Who can reach it there? who can enter there to cut the chain that fastens our souls to Jesus "the Rock of Ages?" No—it is "the hope which is *laid up* for you *in heaven*," ("where thieves do not break through nor steal,") (Col. i. 5). It is the "lively hope" into which we are begotten again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, *reserved in heaven* for us," (1 Pet. i. 3, 4, marg.). It is eternally safe, because it is laid up there. It is infallibly sure to us, because it is *in Jesus* for us. "*In whom* also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own

will. . . . In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory," (Eph. i. 11-14). Oh what fulness of blessing is ours as "*the heirs of promise!*" God the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, is "the earnest" of all that is "set before us!"

This is "*the purpose* of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" who saith, "I will work and who shall let it?" (Isa. xliii. 13). Can we doubt "*the immutability* of his counsel" after this? Nay, for he has "*confirmed* it by an oath, that by *two* immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation."

"God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. xxiii. 19). "Once have I sworn by my holiness, *that I will not lie,*" (Ps. lxxxix. 35): it is "*impossible!*" Oh blessed impossibility. It is the only thing which God has said he cannot do, "He cannot deny himself," (2 Tim. ii. 13). He cannot cheat, deceive, prove faithless, or utter falsehood. He cannot "lie." With him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," (James i. 17). "I am the Lord: I change not," (Mal. iii. 6).

Oh! let me then at length be taught,
 What I am still so slow to learn,
 That God is love and changes not,
 Nor knows the shadow of a turn. (COWPER.)

Has he not himself challenged us to prove him inconstant? "What iniquity have your fathers found in me?" "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?" &c. (Jer. ii. 5, 31; Mic. vi. 3). His own people can ask the same questions of their own hearts, and answer them too: "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Doth *his promise fail* for evermore? and I said, This is *my* infirmity," &c. (Ps. lxxvii. 7-10). "For ever, O Lord, thy word is *settled* in heaven," (Ps. cxix. 89).

"*Two immutable things*" hath God given unto us, in order that "we might have a strong consolation!" So that all this is done *for our comfort!* Not for our security, for we should have been just as safe if God had never said a word to us about it; but for our comfort, yea, for our "*strong* consolation," for our steady comfort and lasting joy. Oh, how amazing! How marvellous his condescending care that we might be perfectly at rest in our minds about our eternal salvation in Christ Jesus! He would have us "*abound* in hope" (Rom. xv. 13), and *filled* "with all joy and peace in believing:" "of good courage," and "*strong* in the Lord," (Ps. xxvii. 13, 14; Eph. vi. 10). He would have us fed upon "strong meat;" how often he himself promises, "*I will strengthen thee,*" (Isa. xli. 10).

Oh what provision he has made for our *abounding consolation* (2 Cor. i. 5), and for our true felicity. He has promised "exceeding great and precious promises," and has "confirmed" them by his oath, expressly for our enjoyment of "strong consolation."

Ah! why then our lack of it? why our fears and doubts? why our tremblings and forebodings of impending danger? Surely, surely it is that we are looking to something within ourselves, instead of looking to that which is "within the veil." All up there is immovable and unchanging. All down here is fluctuating and uncertain.

"There are many who tell us that they are unfeignedly trusting in Christ, but that they have no peace of conscience, no assurance of divine mercy: this privilege, they add, is the attainment of a favoured few. Others profess to have attained it; but if we inquire from what it is derived, one speaks of his comfortable feelings, another of some cheering text of Scripture borne home on his mind, and a third of the work of God's Spirit consciously proceeding in his heart. But all this is utterly wrong. To speak of trusting in Christ unfeignedly, and yet having no peace with God, is to say *that his priesthood has not brought in perfection*," &c.—(Extract from Tait's "*Meditationes Hebraicæ*," vol. i. pp. 490, 491.)

When the priesthood of Jesus is really understood, and where he, as the promise of the promises is fully

relied on—the oath of Jehovah confirming all, *there* “strong consolation” may be continually realised, for it exists independently of *all* outward circumstances; it depends solely on the person and finished work of Jesus.

It will be as on that night when the angel proclaimed to the shepherds the birth of Jesus, saying, “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy,” &c. It mattered not with what feelings the shepherds might have left their homes that night—one, sad, lonely, and bereft; another, merry with the intoxicating pleasures of this life; a third, heavily burdened with a felt load of sin, &c. The “great joy” that came to them through the angel’s message, came utterly independent of outward circumstances, or of their own inward frames and feelings. It was all *in Jesus*, and in believing the tidings concerning *Him*, the joy became their own.

Therefore the Apostle adds:—

VER. 20. “WHETHER THE FORERUNNER IS FOR US ENTERED, EVEN JESUS, MADE AN HIGH PRIEST FOR EVER, AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC.

Would you realise the “strong consolation” provided for you as an heir of promise? let your hope lay hold on that “within the veil,” even on Jesus: then it will be yours.

My thoughts surmount these lower skies,
And look within the veil;
There springs of endless pleasure rise,
The waters never fail.

M

There I behold, with sweet delight,
 The blessed Three in One;
 And strong affections fix my sight
 On God's incarnate Son. (WATTS.)

Led up by faith into the innermost part of the heavenly temple, into the most holy place "*within the veil*," we are shewn *Jesus* there. It is on the person of Christ our eye is to be fixed. "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even *Jesus*"—not merely his work is set before us, but *himself*; not the priestly service merely, but the great high *priest*.

And how truly blessed is this. "Whom have I in heaven but *thee*? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee," (Ps. lxxiii. 25). "My soul shall make her *boast* in the Lord," (Ps. xxxiv. 2). For *why* is *Jesus* there? Thither "the forerunner is *for us* entered!" Yes, it is all "*for us*." "He died for us." He lives "for us." He "maketh intercession for us." He entered there "for us." He now appears in the presence of God "for us." It is as our "forerunner" he is there. He is gone to prepare a place "for us," "Christ the first-fruits: afterward they that are Christ's at his coming," (1 Cor. xv. 23). He is only gone before. Like his disciple John, who "did *outrun* Peter" (lit. "*ran before* more quickly than Peter"), *Jesus* has outrun us, and is gone before as our "forerunner." It proves his greater constraint of love, while it gives him what the Father loves him to have, "pre-eminence" in all things, (Col. i. 18, 19; John xx. 4).

But the crowning point of all is this. He is there "for ever;" "made an high priest *for ever* after the order of Melchisedec." This is our "strong consolation." "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and *for ever*."

CHAPTER VII.

THE PERFECTION OF CHRIST'S MELCHISEDEC
PRIESTHOOD.

MELCHISEDEC A TYPE OF CHRIST.

HEB. vii. 1-3. "FOR THIS MELCHISEDEC. . . . ABIDETH A PRIEST
CONTINUALLY."

AS it was the grand imperfection of the Aaronic priesthood, that *death* was stamped upon it in every part, so it is the grand consummating point of perfection in the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ that "*he ever liveth.*"

We cannot read those fatal words of God to Moses in the first appointment of the priesthood—"take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, *and his sons with him,*" (Exod. xxviii. 1), without the painful conviction forcing itself upon the mind, that Aaron must die, and be succeeded by "his sons." It was impossible that there could be a visibly continuous priesthood on the earth, after man's fall, except through succession. And this, we know, could never represent the priesthood of that great high priest who "ever liveth."

Therefore, when it pleased God to give a representation of the ever-continuing priesthood of Christ Jesus, he did it by selecting one single individual from amongst

men who should be an high priest all his life, and of whose death we should never hear. This was all that was really necessary to constitute him a type of our everlasting high priest. "This Melchisedec," in his typical character and history, "abideth a priest continually." The intervening words might always be read as if written in a parenthesis, though they contain a most important summary of those points regarding Melchisedec, on which much of the Apostle's argument rests.

VER. 1, 2, 3. "FOR THIS MELCHISEDEC, KING OF SALEM, PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD, WHO MET ABRAHAM RETURNING FROM THE SLAUGHTER OF THE KINGS, AND BLESSED HIM; TO WHOM ALSO ABRAHAM GAVE A TENTH PART OF ALL: FIRST BEING, BY INTERPRETATION, KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND AFTER THAT ALSO, KING OF SALEM, WHICH IS, KING OF PEACE; WITHOUT FATHER, WITHOUT MOTHER, WITHOUT DESCENT, HAVING NEITHER BEGINNING OF DAYS, NOR END OF LIFE; BUT, MADE LIKE UNTO THE SON OF GOD, ABIDETH A PRIEST CONTINUALLY."

"And Melchisedec *king* of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was *the priest* of the most high God," (Gen. xiv. 18). In the regal character of Melchisedec's priesthood, we have presented to us an aspect of the priesthood of Jesus, not to be found elsewhere. "*He* shall be a priest upon his throne," a royal priest, such as no priest of Aaron's line ever could have been, (Zech. vi. 12, 13). Nor was this all. In Melchisedec we do not see a priest atoning on the altar without, nor inter-

ceding "within the veil," like Aaron; but a priest *coming forth to bless*.

Jesus wrought out his atoning work when here on earth, and now intercedes for us "within the veil" in heaven; but his coming forth to bless awaits the period of his second coming, when he shall be manifested in his true Melchisedec character as "a priest upon his throne."

There must first be "the slaughter of the kings;" that is the overcoming of his enemies and the enemies of his people, whether viewed individually in the spiritual foes daily and hourly encountered by every child of God in conflict with the evil one, or collectively in the united enemies of the Church of Christ. All these confederate kings must be trodden under foot by our Joshua, or slain by the sword as by our David, ere the reign of peace can be established under Jesus, our true *Solomon*. But then the blessing will flow forth in its full, unhindered channel, from Jesus our Melchisedec priest. Then he will be "*king* of Salem," as well as "*priest* of the most high God," his very name proclaiming unto us what he is—"king of righteousness," and "king of peace." These will be pre-eminently the characteristics of his kingdom. "Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, . . . and the work of righteousness shall be peace," &c. (Isa. xxxii. 1, 17, 18), for "mercy and truth are met together; *righteousness* and *peace* have kissed each other," (Ps. lxxxv. 10). "Rejoice greatly, O daughter

of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem ; behold, thy King cometh unto thee, &c. And he shall *speake peace* unto the heathen," (Zech. ix. 9, 10). "I will raise unto David a *righteous* Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper," whose very name shall be called "the Lord our righteousness," (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6). "In his days shall the righteous flourish ; and *abundance of peace* so long as the moon endureth," &c. (Ps. lxxii.) ; for then there shall be "rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent," (1 Kings v. 4), but "*peace and quietness*" shall prevail under him whose name shall be called Solomon, *i. e.*, *peaceable* ! (1 Chron. xxii. 9, marg.). His will not be the severity of a righteous kingly administration alone, but this will be blended with a peace flowing from the atoning work of our great high priest. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Rom. v. 1). His last bequest on earth was peace, "Peace I leave with you," &c. (John xiv. 27). His thrice repeated salutation after his resurrection was peace,—"*Peace be unto you*," (John xx. 19, 21, 26). The fruit of his indwelling is peace, (Rom. xiv. 17). He is himself "*our peace*," (Eph. ii. 14). He is the Prince of Peace, and "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end!" &c. (Isa. ix. 6, 7). He is the king of the city of peace, the new Jerusalem.

Oh what a kingdom his will be !

Surely it was in looking forward to this blessed con-

summation of his priestly work, that Jesus found such abounding and sufficient consolation to sustain him in the immediate prospect of his atoning sufferings here on earth. For did he not once and again allude to the coming kingdom as to that which was uppermost in his thoughts during that last solemn night in the supper-chamber in Jerusalem?

"When the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled *in the kingdom* of God." Again, he took the cup, and said unto them, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine *until the kingdom* of God shall come," (Luke xxii. 14-18).

Again, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations: and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table *in my kingdom*," &c. (Luke xxii. 28-30). See also John xviii. 36, 37; Luke xxii. 69; and Ps. xxii. 27, 28.

Oh, it leads us into blessed fellowship with the thoughts of his heart, to be contemplating him in this his Melchisedec character—this blending of the kingly administration with the priestly. And surely thoughts like these should oftener fill *our* hearts, when in the Supper of the Lord, *we* eat the bread and drink the wine, for a perpetual memory of this his coming again

—his coming forth to *bless* us, and of his royal bounty to feed the countless myriads whom he has made more than conquerors, that they may “sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,”—at rest for ever :

“All their toils and conflicts *over*.”

“This congress of Abraham and Melchisedec, after Abraham had gotten the victory over all his adversaries, was a type and representation of the glorious congress and meeting of Christ and his Church at the last day, when it shall have finished its warfare, and prove victorious over all its foes. And then will the Lord Christ bring out the stores of heaven for their eternal refreshment, and give them the fulness of the blessing, and all things shall issue in the glory of the most high God.”—(Owen).

When it said of Melchisedec that he was “without father, without mother, without descent,” &c., the simple meaning may be taken, perhaps, from the Syriac version, where it is stated thus:—“of whom neither the father nor mother are recorded in the genealogies.” This agrees strictly with the original, for the word rendered “without descent” is properly without written genealogy, *i.e.*, one whose descent is unknown. This was only true of the antitype in the matter of the priesthood ; and therefore we need look for no more in the type. The genealogies of Jesus are carefully traced as to his natural descent, and it follows of necessity

that it cannot be of natural descent that the Apostle is speaking in the case of Melchisedec. But the strictness with which it was required of the Hebrews, that every priest should be able to trace down his descent from the family of Aaron, would render his argument perfectly familiar to them. (Comp. Num. iii. 10, Ezra ii. 62).

The same thing would apply to the words that follow: "having neither beginning of days nor end of life." It was true of Melchisedec, because as a type he is presented in Scripture without one word to tell either of his birth or his death. He stands alone, without any mention of his family or posterity; he is simply a "priest of the most high God." This was so arranged and designed in the wisdom of the all-wise God, that he might typically represent Jesus the Son of God, who "was in the beginning with God," and "whose years shall have no end," (John i. 2; Ps. cii. 27).

MELCHISEDEC'S SUPERIORITY TO ABRAHAM.

VER. 4-10. "NOW CONSIDER HOW GREAT THIS MAN WAS, UNTO WHOM EVEN THE PATRIARCH ABRAHAM GAVE THE TENTH OF THE SPOILS. AND VERILY THEY THAT ARE OF THE SONS OF LEVI, WHO RECEIVE THE OFFICE OF THE PRIESTHOOD, HAVE A COMMANDMENT TO TAKE TITHES OF THE PEOPLE ACCORDING TO THE LAW, THAT IS, OF THEIR BRETHREN, THOUGH THEY COME OUT OF THE LOINS OF ABRAHAM: BUT HE, WHOSE DESCENT IS NOT COUNTED FROM THEM, RECEIVED TITHES OF ABRAHAM, AND BLESSED HIM THAT HAD THE PROMISES. AND, WITHOUT ALL CONTRADICTION, THE

LESS IS BLESSED OF THE BETTER. AND HERE MEN THAT DIE RECEIVE TITHES; BUT THERE HE RECEIVETH THEM, OF WHOM IT IS WITNESSED THAT HE LIVETH. AND, AS I MAY SO SAY, LEVI ALSO, WHO RECEIVETH TITHES, PAYED TITHES IN ABRAHAM. FOR HE WAS YET IN THE LOINS OF HIS FATHER WHEN MELCHISEDEC MET HIM."

The vast superiority and greatness of Melchisedec, is no mere subject of speculative curiosity; it is one to which we are called to give our careful consideration. May the Lord the Spirit teach us all that he was designed to set forth in type concerning Jesus, the beloved of our souls!

When Melchisedec met Abraham and blessed him, the patriarch on his part "gave him tithes of all," (Gen. xiv. 20). The payment of tithes which have been naturally looked for in later times from a priest of Aaron's line, for thus ran the Lord's "commandment," for "the sons of Levi who receive the office of the priesthood," (Num. xviii. 21-32).

"And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance." Again, "Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel *the tithes which I have given you from them* for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an peace-offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe." But Melchisedec's descent not being counted from them, it was a remarkable indication of Abraham's faith, that Melchisedec was notwithstanding this regarded by him "priest of the most

high God," and worthy to receive from him the "tenth part of all" "Even the patriarch Abraham gave him the tenth of the spoils," (ver. 4).

Viewing Abraham as the father of the whole Hebrew race, it was virtually an acknowledgment of Melchisedec's superiority, not to himself alone, but to every one who descended from him, and therefore, *to all the Levitical priests!* for Levi himself was, as it were, "yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him," (ver. 9, 10).

It is impossible to imagine how the subject could have been placed before the Hebrews in a stronger light than this. An additional argument is drawn from Melchisedec having had no successor in office, whereas the Levitical priests died and followed one another in rapid succession, so that even amongst the high priests there were no fewer than eighty-three before the destruction of the temple.

Another argument still is drawn from Abraham's receiving blessing from Melchisedec, when "without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better," (ver. 6, 7).

The blessings of the priests were a solemn and precious part of their office. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee," &c. (Num. vi. 22-27). And "Aaron lifted up his hand

toward the people, and blessed them," (Lev. ix. 22-24). So when David divided the Levites into courses to minister in the temple, it is written of Aaron that he was separated, "he and his sons for ever, to burn incense before the Lord, to minister unto him, *and to bless in his name* for ever," (1 Chron. xxiii. 13). See also Deut. x. 8; xxi. 5; 2 Chron. xxx. 27.

These things suggest many precious thoughts concerning Jesus. Is it not emphatically from him as our great high priest, that all our blessing flows? (See Ps. cxxxiii. 2, 3). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places *in Christ*," &c. (Eph. i. 3). All blessedness centres in him; "thou hast set *him* to be a blessing for ever," (Ps. xxi. 6, margin; Ps. xxix. 11). Truly, "the blessing of the Lord it maketh rich," (Prov. x. 22).

But while Jesus is thus blessing *us*, do we not learn as we see Melchisedec receiving the tithes from Abraham, that *he* in his Melchisedec character will be the gainer by our conflicts, and be enriched by the spoil won from the enemies' camp? Is not the day coming when *Jesus* will receive "the tenth of all" from all his people? Oh, it is blessed to think of this, and to know that conflict here is not endured in vain, either as to ourselves *or Jesus!*

CHANGE OF THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD.

VER. 11. "IF THEREFORE PERFECTION WERE BY THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD (FOR UNDER IT THE PEOPLE RECEIVED THE LAW), WHAT FURTHER NEED WAS THERE THAT ANOTHER PRIEST SHOULD RISE AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC, AND NOT BE CALLED AFTER THE ORDER OF AARON?"

In proving how much greater Melchisedec was than Abraham (ver. 4, 7), the Apostle intended to shew by inference how much better his order of priesthood was than that of Levi. There was inferiority in the Levitical priesthood, and there was *imperfection*. For had it been perfect no change would have been needed, and no change would have been made. But it never satisfied God, and it never should have satisfied his people. There was always something of failure, and consequently there never could be perfect rest. "Perfection" came *not* "by the Levitical priesthood," and hence arose the necessity that "another priest should rise" after another order. Blessed necessity for us!

CONSEQUENT CHANGE OF THE LAW.

VER. 12. "FOR THE PRIESTHOOD BEING CHANGED, THERE IS MADE OF NECESSITY A CHANGE ALSO OF THE LAW."

This follows from the fact, that "under it (*i. e.*, the Levitical priesthood) the people received the law,"

(ver. 11); for the whole administration of the ceremonies of the law depended on that priesthood. "And of Levi he said, *They* shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: *they* shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt-sacrifice upon thine altar," (Deut. xxxiii. 8-10).

If a burnt-offering was to be offered, "the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar. And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar," &c. "And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood," &c. "And the *priest* shall burn all upon the altar," &c. (Lev. i. 1-9). So expressly was all to be accomplished *through the Levitical priesthood*. It was the same with the meat-offering and all their other offerings, (See Lev. ii. iii. iv. v.). It was the same with their solemn feasts, (See Lev. xxiii. 10, &c.). None but "the priest" could offer for them. It was the same in cases of leprosy and other defilements, the man must "be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests; and the priest shall look on the plague," &c. (Lev. xiii. xiv. xv.). It was even death to any man of the house of Israel who brought not his sacrifice "unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *unto the priest*," &c. (Lev. xvii. 1-6).

Of necessity, therefore, if this priesthood be removed, the administration of the law after that manner must

cease.* "The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law."

For this "change" the Apostle next gives seven reasons, each one bringing to light something of *the seven-fold perfections* of Jesus, our great high priest.

1st, He shews that Moses' law was intended only for the tribe of Levi, whereas by the change of priesthood, a law was required that admitted a priest of the tribe of *Juda*, (ver. 13, 14).

2d, The priests under the law were made so by "the law of a carnal commandment;" but when the priesthood was changed, "*a carnal commandment*" was rendered void, (ver. 15-17).

3d, The law itself needed to be disannulled, for its own "weakness and unprofitableness:" it brought nothing to perfection, (ver. 18, 19).

4th, There was no infallible certainty about the priests of the law, inasmuch as there was no "*oath*" connected with their priesthood, (ver. 20-22).

5th, They were "many priests," because of "*death*," (ver. 23-25).

6th, They were *sinners*, (ver. 26, 27).

* "If under the law the whole worship of God did so depend on the priesthood, that that failing, the whole worship of itself was to cease, as being no more acceptable to God: *how much more* is all worship under the New Testament rejected by him, if there be not a due regard therein unto the Lord Jesus Christ as the only high priest of the Church, and to the efficacy of his discharge of his office."
—(OWEN.)

7th, They were men compassed with infirmity, (ver. 28).

And in all these respects some "*better thing*" was needed, and for us that better thing is provided *in him* who is "made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

1. JESUS IS A ROYAL PRIEST.

VER. 13, 14. "FOR HE OF WHOM THESE THINGS ARE SPOKEN PERTAINETH TO ANOTHER TRIBE, OF WHICH NO MAN GAVE ATTENDANCE AT THE ALTAR. FOR IT IS EVIDENT THAT OUR LORD SPRANG OUT OF JUDA; OF WHICH TRIBE MOSES SPAKE NOTHING CONCERNING PRIESTHOOD."

"Our Lord sprang out of Juda;" therefore when John saw him in the midst of the *throne*, as a *lamb* that had been slain, (most beautifully combining in himself the twofold character of king and priest), it was as "the Lion of the tribe of *Juda*, the root of *David*," that he appeared there, (Rev. v. 6). "I am the root and offspring of *David*," (Rev. xxii. 16; comp. Gen. xlix. 8-12). And at the very moment he was offering the atoning sacrifice of himself (*as a priest*), did not the title put upon his cross proclaim him to be "the king of the Jews"—of the royal tribe of Judah? (John xix. 19). Pilate little thought as he wrote that title, how he was thereby assuring believers that Jesus is their Melchisedec priest. The Jews thought only of a priesthood "after the order of Aaron," and to this, Jesus

truly had no claim. For Jesus was not a Levite; he "sprang out of Juda," according to the prophecy, "There shall come forth a root out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots," &c. (Isa. xi. 1). It is possible that the Apostle had these very words in his mind as he wrote that "our Lord sprang out of Juda." For to *spring* signifies here to *rise as a branch from the stock*, the very idea conveyed by Isaiah. (Comp. also Luke i. 78, marg.) The figure beautifully suggests the thought of resurrection-life in Jesus—like the putting forth of new life and beauty in the buds of spring, after the deadness of the tree in winter. Out of the death of the Jewish priesthood, rose the new and everlasting priesthood of our royal high priest, *Jesus!*

2. JESUS AN EVER-LIVING PRIEST.

VER. 15-17. "AND IT IS YET FAR MORE EVIDENT: FOR THAT AFTER THE SIMILITUDE OF MELCHISEDEC THERE ARISETH ANOTHER PRIEST, WHO IS MADE, NOT AFTER THE LAW OF A CARNAL COMMANDMENT, BUT AFTER THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE. FOR HE TESTIFIETH, THOU ART A PRIEST FOR EVER, AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC."

The law of Moses was "a carnal commandment," and "*weak through the flesh*," (Rom. viii. 3). All its rites were carnal;—"which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, *and carnal ordinances*, imposed on them until the time of reformation," (Heb. ix. 10). The priests themselves were but frail and dying men,

("weak through the flesh,") competent to be priests only in the prime of life, from twenty years of age to fifty, (Num. iv. 47, viii. 24, 25 ; 1 Chron. xxiii. 24-27).

But there was nothing of this in the priesthood of Jesus. *He* is made a priest, "*not* after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life,"—a life that nothing can ever put an end to, for he "liveth unto God." He is "alive for evermore," (Rom. vi. 10 ; Rev. i. 18). He hath "*life in himself*," (John v. 26). It is wonderful to contemplate him in the power of this endless *life*, destroying "*him that had the power of death !*" (Heb. ii. 14). But as we think of it, we go to him the more confidently with the plea, "Deliver us from the evil one, *for thine is—the power*," (Matt. vi. 13). "The power of an endless life" is his, that he may always be able to deliver us from the dominion of death.

"Thou art a priest *for ever*." "Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end," (Ps. cii. 27). "The same yesterday, to-day, *and for ever*," (Heb. xiii. 8). "The prince of life"—the great, eternal "*I am*," (Acts iii. 15 ; Exod. iii. 14 ; Ps. xxi. 4, lxxii. 15).

"I know that my Redeemer *liveth*," or hath an indissoluble life, (Job xix. 25). It is a word of peculiar force and beauty, its primary meaning being strength or vigour, *as opposed to death*, which is properly failure or dissolution. Parkhurst says on this word, that the plural term *lives* is often used of men and animals, be-

cause life in them consists of repeated acts of vital energy. But he adds "though הי in the singular is often applied to Jehovah, and he is called לֵחַיִּים הַיִּים the living Elohim, yet I do not find that his *life* itself is ever expressed by the plural word; for his *life* is, if I may so speak, *one permanent act* enduring from eternity to eternity." (See Parkhurst on חַיָּה .)

So *powerful* is this "endless life" in Jesus. And how precious to his people is this eternal freshness of life in him, "the fountain of living waters," (Jer. ii. 13). We could indeed form no idea of it, were it not that we who have believed in the Son of God "*have everlasting life.*" But the earnest we thus have of it creates in us a vibration of exquisite delight, as we touch this sweetest chord—the "endless life" of Jesus.

And this is one unspeakable privilege, *because* Jesus is a high priest after the "order of Melchisedec." Not as some have imagined that Melchisedec *was Christ*. The language of the 15th verse directly forbids their idea, for it is said that "after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth *another* priest," where the original word is not merely $\alpha\lambda\lambda\omicron\varsigma$, *i. e.*, "another," but $\alpha\lambda\lambda\omicron\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\eta\varsigma$, "*one of another stock or race.*"—(Owen).

And this other priest "is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of *an endless life*. FOR he testifieth, Thou art a priest *for ever* after the order of Melchisedec," ("having neither beginning of days, *nor end of life*"). (See ver. 3).

3. JESUS BRINGS US UNTO GOD.

VER. 18, 19. "FOR THERE IS VERILY A DISANNULLING OF THE COMMANDMENT GOING BEFORE, FOR THE WEAKNESS AND UNPROFITABLENESS THEREOF. FOR THE LAW MADE NOTHING PERFECT, BUT THE BRINGING IN OF A BETTER HOPE DID; BY THE WHICH WE DRAW NIGH UNTO GOD."

"The priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year," &c. "The Holy Ghost *this* signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was *not yet* made manifest, *while as the first tabernacle was yet standing*: which was a figure for the time then present," &c. (Heb. ix. 6-10). Here is God's own interpretation of the passage before us. While the first tabernacle was standing, there was partial, but there was *not free* access for his people unto God. The law shewed Israel in a "figure" how it was to be, but it could not spiritually bring them into the very presence of their God: they could only go into the first tabernacle, where the veil hid the Shekinah glory from their eyes. The high priest alone, as the type of the Lord Jesus, could enter once a-year into the holiest of all. Here, then, was "weakness and unprofitableness" in the law. But the forerunner, "even Jesus made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," is for us entered "*within the veil*" (Heb. vi. 19, 20), so that we can now "draw nigh unto God."

This word "draw nigh" corresponds to that in the Hebrew which is commonly rendered to offer; the simple meaning of an "offering" being that which was brought unto God. The book of Leviticus is full of it, the original word occurring no less than one hundred and twenty-five times. How solemn a character is thus given to that book, while *access unto God* is so constantly its theme! Oh that as his spiritual Israel, we knew and realized more of the spiritual reality! There is too much of following Christ "afar off," (Luke xxii. 54; Exod. xx. 18, 21). We live up to far too little of our privileges as the Lord's "holy priesthood." The Lord stir up many hearts to seek to draw nearer Jesus.

Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!
Even though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!

As the high priest reverently drawing aside the veil on the day of atonement, and going through into the holiest of all, there beheld the Shekinah glory, the very presence of Jehovah—so should our faith! not now, on one day in the year only, for when Jesus died upon the cross, the veil was rent in twain from top to bottom, till "not a shred of the dreadful curtain remained to intercept our way into the holiest," at all times and under all circumstances.

They find access at every hour
 To God within the veil;
 Hence they derive a quickening power,
 And joys that never fail. (WATTS.)

What would the glory and splendour of Pharaoh's court have been to a high priest who had just come from the holiest where he had beheld the glory of Jehovah? *As* faint and worthless would the vain-glory of this world appear in *our eyes*, if we oftener entered within the veil unto Jesus, if our faith oftener brought us "nigh unto *God*," even to God *himself*! for our privilege is nothing less. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you," (James iv. 8). Oh, what a wonderful sight for angels to contemplate, is the drawing nigh of the sinner unto the Holy One!

Mary drew nigh when she "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word," (Luke x. 39). John drew nigh when he leaned "on Jesus' bosom," (John xiii. 23). The poor woman drew nigh when she "kissed his feet" and washed them with her tears, (Luke vii. 38). Nicodemus drew nigh when he "came to Jesus" by night for fear of the Jews, (John iii. 2). God himself invited Moses to draw nigh when he said, "Behold there is *a place by me*, and thou shalt stand upon a rock," &c. (Exod. xxxiii. 21, 22). And what could give a more wondrous view of this drawing nigh to God, than the experience of the bride in Solomon's Song, i. 4? She prays, "Draw me," and immediately adds, "The king hath brought me *into his chamber*!" This is indeed the

purchased privilege of the bride for whom the Lord laid down his life : the law opened no such way of access unto God, except as it was the shadow of good things to come. "It was the bringing in" of our better hope, but Jesus himself declared, "No man cometh unto the Father but *by me*," (John xiv. 6). "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ; *by whom* also *we have access* by faith into this grace wherein we stand," (Rom. v. 2). We owe it all to Jesus our Melchisedec priest.

O then, tried believer, when in darkness "draw nigh" to that Shekinah glory, and be "lightened," (Ps. xxxiv. 5). When burdened with a felt sense of sin, "draw nigh" to the mercy-seat sprinkled with blood : when others are laid upon your hearts, "draw nigh," and tell their case to Jesus, (like the mother for her child in Mark vii. 25, 26). "Draw nigh" with your morning and evening offering, to present Jesus the Lamb of God as your atoning sacrifice. "Draw nigh" hour after hour all through the day with gifts and services of love, to be presented by your great high priest. "Draw nigh" so often that you may be more *with God* than with any friend on earth.

4. JESUS THE SURETY OF A BETTER COVENANT.

VER. 20-22. "AND INASMUCH AS NOT WITHOUT AN OATH HE WAS MADE PRIEST : (FOR THOSE PRIESTS WERE MADE WITHOUT AN OATH ; BUT THIS WITH AN OATH BY HIM THAT SAID UNTO HIM, THE LORD

SWARE AND WILL NOT REPENT, THOU ART A PRIEST FOR EVER
AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC :) BY SO MUCH WAS JESUS
MADE A SURETY OF A BETTER TESTAMENT."

We know the value of "an oath for confirmation," (Heb. vi. 16). This God never gave to the priests of the first covenant; it was reserved for Jesus. "Nothing," writes Owen, "in the whole legal administration being confirmed by the oath of God, it was always ready for a removal at the appointed season." But all is now confirmed by an oath; and all that God's oath is worth, goes into the scale to give the superiority to Christ's better covenant. "Inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: *by so much* was Jesus made a surety of a better testament," (ver. 20, 22). It is this which makes over to us all the "strong consolation" of chap. vi. 16-20. "The Lord sware and will not repent." "I am the Lord: I *change not*," (Ps. cx. 4; Mal. iii. 6). With him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," (James i. 17). Greater security we could not have.

And the special preciousness of the oath lies in this, that it concerns the living *person* of Jesus: "*Thou art a priest*," &c. It is in truth God swearing by himself, and for himself! Thus we are led from shadows and from things, to the very person of our great high priest: and that, too, in a character of indescribable importance. For if we had no better security under the new covenant than Israel had under the old, we might any day

be left as entirely without an high priest as they are ; and consequently, without any way of drawing nigh to God. All our security, therefore, we owe to the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ, our "*security*" for "the better covenant."

The Greek word *enguos* rendered "surety," occurs nowhere else ; it seems to have much the same signification as mediator, and yet has a stronger meaning. For whilst a mediator may simply mean "one who transacts any business between two others," (comp. 1 Tim. ii. 5), "a surety" is one who makes a covenant or promise, or gives security or bail. Therefore Owen explains a surety to be "one that undertaketh for another wherein he is defective." Most beautifully does Jacob set forth the character of Jesus (in Gen. xxxi. 39) as our shepherd-surety: "That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee ; I bare the loss of it ; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night," (Comp. John xvii. 12). And Judah foreshadowed him as surety for his brethren ; "And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me," &c., "I will be surety for him ; of my hand shalt thou require him. If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever," (Gen. xliii. 9, xliv. 32). Whilst St Paul acted the part of a surety for one who had in time past been most "unprofitable," even for Onesimus, concerning whom he writes, "If he hath wronged thee, or

oweth thee ought, *put that on mine account*; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it," (Phil. ver. 18, 19).

When we pause to think over our debts to God, and realise that nothing short of death can pay them, nay, that even death itself, death eternal, on our part can never pay him what we owe,—we might well sit down in hopeless despair if we had not the oath of God to assure us that Jesus is in this respect *a Priest that has satisfied him* on our behalf. He has *sworn* that Jesus, as a Priest after the order of Melchisedec, has become surety for the better covenant, and is accepted. Oh the comfort of such a truth as this! words cannot utter it; that soul alone which has entered into something of the depths of its own lost estate, can appreciate its untold preciousness.

But 'tis thus we learn to cry with David, "Be surety for thy servant for good, let not the proud oppress me," (Ps. cxix. 122). "Lord, I am oppressed; undertake *for me*," (Isa. xxxviii. 14). "Do thou *for me*, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. For I am poor and needy," &c. (Ps. cix. 21, 22). "In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust: thou shalt *answer for me*, O Lord my God," (Ps. xxxviii. 15, Prayer-book version).

5. JESUS THE ONE UNCHANGING PRIEST.

VER. 23-25. "AND THEY TRULY WERE MANY PRIESTS, BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT SUFFERED TO CONTINUE BY REASON OF DEATH : BUT THIS MAN, BECAUSE HE CONTINUETH EVER, HATH AN UNCHANGEABLE PRIESTHOOD. WHEREFORE HE IS ABLE ALSO TO SAVE THEM TO THE UTMOST THAT COME UNTO GOD BY HIM, SEEING HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM."

They were many "by reason of death." Death! Oh, how it puts an end to everything we enjoy here; how it severs every tie! How it cuts down one priest after another! Aaron died, (Num. xx. 25-28). Eleazer died, (Josh. xxiv. 33). Eli died, (1 Sam iv. 15-18). Jehoida died, (2 Chron. xxiv. 15), &c. We know but too well the breaks made by death, and the pangs with which it rends the heart. "When all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel," (Num. xx. 29). For a whole month there reigned all the gloom, and sadness, and stillness of death.

What mourning then would fill the whole family of God, if Jesus our high priest could die, and his priesthood pass into other hands! But oh the joy that "*he liveth!*" We shall never be clad in sackcloth and mourning for Jesus; never shall his bride be clothed in other than "white raiment." "*Jesus continueth ever.*"

I know that my Redeemer lives,
 Oh the sweet joy this sentence gives!
 He lives; and while he lives, I'll sing,
 He lives my Prophet, Priest, and King.

"The Lord liveth." "Thou, O Lord, remainest," (Ps. xviii. 46; Lam. v. 19). "*They* truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because *he* continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood:" marg. "which passeth not from one to another," *i. e.*, it goes not into other hands. And what specialty of comfort is here reserved for the timid and retiring believer. There is no passing of the priesthood from one to another: when once our tale is told, we never have to tell it over again to a stranger. It is always the same heart of love that listens and intercedes. *And it is the Christian who has been to him the oftenest*, who best knows how to appreciate this most precious assurance—it "passeth not from one to another." Oh, what clusters of richest, choicest privileges are ours, in our Melchisedec priest! For we have not done with them yet. It is "because He continueth ever," that he is able to save us "evermore" (ver. 25, marg.), in other words, "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." It is not uncommon to hear the death of the Lord Jesus spoken of, as if it were *everything* to us. But Paul says, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, *much more*,

being reconciled, we shall be *saved by His life*," (Rom. v. 10). And again, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, *yea rather*, that is risen again," &c. (Rom. viii. 34). It is to his life of intercession that we owe the efficacy of it all. For when it is said, "He is able also to save them to the uttermost . . . *seeing* he ever *liveth*," &c., it is certainly implied, that if any interruption occurred to his life of intercession, it must also interrupt the work of our *salvation*.

Let this teach us to set a higher value on his hidden life of intercession. The "perpetual incense" on the golden altar before the veil, was *as constantly offered* as the morning and evening lambs upon the brazen altar for atonement "day by day continually," (Exod. xxix. 38, 39; xxx. 1-8). But whilst the latter was in the sight of all the assembled congregation, the former was seen only of the priests who had access into the holy place. So it is now.

The death of Jesus is in some faint measure valued and relied on; but his hidden life of intercession, oh *how little!* The Lord teach us more of its unknown preciousness!

"Rom. viii. 34, makes *intercession* the last and highest of four things. 'It is Christ that died—yea rather, that is risen again—who is even at the right hand of God:—who *even* maketh intercession for us.' When we look to Christ's ministry before the throne, and think of its all-sufficiency, we cannot but feel that

this, superadded to all that has gone before, makes everything fast and firm; . . . and that, looking to this unwearied ministry of the Elder Brother within the veil, the very fullest assurance of hope may fill the believer's bosom, and may raise to its highest pitch the tone of holy triumph with which he can repeat the challenge, 'Who is he that condemneth?' Oh the height and the depth, the length and the breadth of Emmanuel's love! No spot in the universe but must be made the scene of its actings and outcomings. Here on earth, 'He died for us!' Yonder on his throne 'he maketh intercession for us!'—(Extracts from "*No Condemnation*," by Rev. J. Purves). "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." How sweetly our thoughts are led away from ourselves to Jesus: it is not our poor prayers that we are set to contemplate, but the prayers *Jesus offers for us!* Three times over in this one verse is our attention fixed upon *Him*. "He is able" to save all that come "by *Him*," seeing "*He* ever liveth." God is looking at Jesus, why are not we? God is thinking what *His* unchanging priesthood, and *His* life-long intercession are able to effect for us; why think we so little of it? Oh for a deeper entrance by faith into the meaning of those intensely significant words, "Thou art a Priest *for ever* after the order of Melchisedec!"

Owen has a very valuable remark on the words, "He is *able* also to save," &c.:—"We are too apt to take

this for granted ; yet it needed special qualifications. We are to look to the priesthood of Christ as that which divine wisdom hath appointed to be *the only way* whereby we may be saved."

6. JESUS A HOLY PRIEST.

VER. 26, 27. "FOR SUCH AN HIGH PRIEST BECAME US, WHO IS HOLY, HARMLESS, UNDEFILED, SEPARATE FROM SINNERS, AND MADE HIGHER THAN THE HEAVENS; WHO NEEDETH NOT DAILY, AS THOSE HIGH PRIESTS, TO OFFER UP SACRIFICE, FIRST FOR HIS OWN SINS, AND THEN FOR THE PEOPLE'S: FOR THIS HE DID ONCE, WHEN HE OFFERED UP HIMSELF."

Perhaps of all the reasons brought forward by the Apostle in this chapter, for the necessity of a change of priesthood, none strikes the mind as more self-evident than this—that sinful priests could never offer a perfect atonement. "Those high priests," *being sinners*, had to offer up daily sacrifice for their "own sins." It was manifestly impossible that "perfection" could ever have been brought in "by the Levitical priesthood," under these circumstances.

Most powerful, therefore, and most conclusive is the Apostle's argument—"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." A *sinning* priest will not do for us ; we want a *holy* priest. And this is what we have in Jesus, so emphatically called God's "*Holy One*," (Acts ii. 27).

The holiness of the high priest in the type was very strongly insisted upon. His very garments were to be "*holy garments*," (Exod. xxviii. 2, 4), and upon his head he wore the "*holy crown*," with the plate of pure gold upon it, engraved with the words, "*Holiness to the Lord*;" (Exod. xxviii. 36; xxix. 6); while he was anointed with the "*holy anointing oil*," and set apart to minister in the most holy things. Never could it be forgotten that "such an high priest became us, who is *holy*," &c. when on the very forehead of the high priest the words were "*always*" to be seen, "*Holiness to the Lord*." Jesus wore no outside tokens of his holiness, for his whole life, his whole self, proclaimed that he was the "*Holy One*." Even devils saw and felt it, (Mark i. 24). But his delight in it betrayed itself, in that simple yet touching appeal, "*Holy Father!*" (John xvii. 11). This was where his heart found rest. He, too, could cry—"Preserve my soul, *for I am holy*: O thou, my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee," (Ps. lxxxvi. 2; xvi. 10. See also Luke i. 35, which tells of the holiness of his *nature*. Comp. Lev. xxi. 6).

"Holy, harmless, undefiled." *Harmless* signifies without blame or guilt. It tells of that perfection in Jesus which betrayed no blemish or failure. "*Who did no sin*, neither was guile found in his mouth," (1 Pet. ii. 22, 23). "*A lamb without blemish and without spot*," (1 Pet. i. 19). "*He had done no violence*, neither

was any deceit in his mouth," (Isa. liii. 9). Comp. Lev. xxi. 16-24.

Words are heaped together to tell us what an High Priest we have got—words that seem designed to invite us to consider His perfectness of holiness, from every point of view. He is not only "harmless" in himself, but "undefiled" by contact with others. We are led to this special meaning of the Word from the defilement always contracted by the priests of old by contact with the dead, (Lev. xxi. 1-4). And especially because it was required of "the high priest" that *he* should not defile himself even "for his father, or for his mother!" (Lev. xxi. 10-12). "Neither shall he *go in* to any dead body." There must be no outgoings of the heart's affections after any dead, or unclean, corrupt thing. What a view this gives us of the pure heart of Jesus! Not a thought, or feeling, or affection was defiled by contact with the uncleanness of all around him. He was always the "Undefiled" One!

And He was "separate from sinners"—the *true* Nazarite, or separate One, (Num. vi. 1-21). Do we not hear Him say, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me; *I will not know a wicked person*. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight," &c. (Ps. ci. 2-8; xvi. 4; xvii. 4). And is not *He* emphatically

"*the Man*" spoken of in the 1st Psalm, who "walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful?" Such language is true of none but Jesus in its full meaning, and of him—*how true!* Not more separate from his brethren was the poor outcast leper "without the camp," *dwelling alone*, than was Jesus the Holy One from the sinners of our earth. (The Septuagint use the same word in Lev. xiii. 46 as the Apostle here.) It tells of the isolation of spirit He must ever have realised among men. "I have walked in thy truth. I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil-doers; and will not sit with the wicked. I will wash my hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord," &c. (Ps. xxvi.) Beautiful description of the person of our great High Priest!—"separate from sinners." (Comp. also Gen. xlix. 26; Deut. xxxiii. 16).

"And made higher than the heavens." "Such an high priest became us," as could transact business, not in the shadowy earthly tabernacle, the figure of the true, but in "heaven itself," *in the immediate "presence of God!"* (Chap. ix. 24). Oh the preciousness of such a priest as Jesus!—"higher than the heavens." "We have an advocate *with* the Father;" ever present with Him, in "heaven itself," (1 John ii. 1).

Hark! those bursts of acclamation!

Hark, those loud triumphant chords!

Jesus takes the highest station ;
 Oh what joy the sight affords !
 Crown him, crown him :
 King of kings, and Lord of lords. (KELLY.)

"Thou hast ascended *on high*," (Ps. lxxviii. 18). "*I ascend* unto my Father," (John xx. 17). It was "such an high priest" as this we needed, not a priest "on earth," (chap. viii. 4), but a priest in heaven, in the very presence of God most holy.

"Such an high priest became us, who is *holy*," &c. Sin and holiness are essentially opposite ; if, therefore, Jesus was "*holy*," he was "*without sin*." And if "*without sin*," then exclaims the Apostle triumphantly, he had no need to offer for his own sins ! The very point in which every priest of Aaron's line fell short of perfection, is the very one in which Jesus stands forth pre-eminently perfect. They were sinners, and had to offer sacrifice for themselves. It was required of the whole congregation, as such, that upon the altar they must offer "two lambs of the first year, day by day continually," (Exod. xxix. 38, 39). It is *possible* that St Paul refers to this, including the high priests : but some think he means only to allude to the annual day of atonement, when year by year the high priest had publicly to offer "first for his own sins, and then for the people's," (Lev. xvi.). Be this as it may, *the* point to be remarked upon is this—that Jesus as the holy, harmless, undefiled One, had no sins of his own to offer for ;

and, therefore, was "*such* an high priest" as "*became us!*"—just the very one we wanted.

Oh that we "daily" felt more of the deep obligation we are under to Jesus our Melchisedec priest, and lived more as his "holy priesthood!" (1 Pet. ii. 5).

7. JESUS, THE PERFECT HIGH PRIEST.

VER. 28. "FOR THE LAW MAKETH MEN HIGH PRIESTS WHICH HAVE INFIRMITY; BUT THE WORD OF THE OATH, WHICH WAS SINCE THE LAW, MAKETH THE SON, WHO IS CONSECRATED (marg. 'perfected') FOR EVERMORE."

Jesus, in thee our eyes behold
 A thousand glories more
 Than the rich gems, and polish'd gold,
 The sons of Aaron wore.
 They first their own burnt-offerings brought
 To purge themselves from sin:
 Thy life was pure, without a spot,
 And all thy nature clean.
 Fresh blood, as constant as the day,
 Was on their altar spilt:
 But thy one offering takes away
 For ever, all our guilt.
 Jesus, the King of glory, reigns
 On Sion's heavenly hill;
 Looks like a Lamb that has been slain,
 And wears his priesthood still. (WATTS.)

The Apostle has reached his climax. Once for all, he says, the high priests under the law are imperfect and infirm, and able to bring nothing to perfection. God has therefore provided "some better thing," whereby all is brought to perfection. For "the word of the

oath, which was since the law, maketh *Jesus* our high priest, and he is "perfected for evermore." Here, then, our hearts find rest. Here our souls can safely repose. This is all we want; absolute, entire perfection; no flaw, no failure; it is perfection for the countless ages of eternity. How our hearts have longed for this when wearied with the imperfections of all below! Oh then, let us now understand that it is ours. Let us not fear to enjoy it fully in Jesus. We honour him when we rest in his perfection; and it is the desire of the Father's heart concerning him, "that all men should honour *the Son*, even as they honour the Father," (John v. 23). "The word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh *the Son* (high priest), who is consecrated for evermore."

It is impossible to estimate the measure of security, comfort, and "strong consolation," which God has given to believers, in swearing concerning Jesus, that he is a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. It ensures *everything* to them! There is such perfection in it, that nothing, *nothing* is wanting. Jesus, "the *Son*" of God, is a *perfect* priest—"consecrated for evermore." The Lord the Spirit lead us more and more into the fulness of this perfection in Jesus! We have only to know it, and our joy shall be full.

NOTE.—"The word of the oath which was since the law." These are important words, and very valuable in leading to a true interpretation of the Psalms. The Apostle alludes, of course, to

the oath in Ps. cx. 5. Now it has been affirmed by excellent divines, that this oath was the transaction of the Eternal Three, when they entered into covenant between themselves in a far back eternity, &c. Throughout Scripture, there is no direct mention of any such covenant, and here is one passage, at least, to prove that the oath concerning the priesthood of Jesus was certainly *not* before time, but "since the law." The *oath* was given to David, on whatever special occasion that Psalm was composed. God's "eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," has been from all eternity, as the words declare, (Eph. iii. 11). But his oath was sworn *in time*, "since the law."

HEB. VIII.

BEING about to enter upon a new subject, the Apostle briefly sums up the contents of the former chapter, in these momentous, thrilling words:—

VER. 1, 2. "NOW OF THE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE SPOKEN THIS IS THE SUM: WE HAVE SUCH AN HIGH PRIEST, WHO IS SET ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF THE MAJESTY IN THE HEAVENS; A MINISTER OF THE SANCTUARY, AND OF THE TRUE TABERNACLE, WHICH THE LORD PITCHED, AND NOT MAN."

All that has gone before in the seven preceding chapters, is made to converge to this one point, the very root and centre, the focus, the fountain-head of all,—*the person of the Lord Jesus Christ*: "We have such an high priest!" "This is *the sum*." And this is very precious, very glorious, and very dear to the hearts of His people. And oh! how simple. There is no vast system of truth to be laid down, no perplexing doctrinal statements to be explained. Oh no. "Of the things which we have spoken *this* is the sum: We have such *an high priest*," &c. It is on the person of Jesus that every eye is to be riveted.

"*Such* an high priest." This is in allusion to all that has been already spoken concerning him. First,

that He was the Son of God (chap. i.); then, the Son of Man (chap. ii.); the true Moses, the true Joshua, the true Aaron, the true Melchisedec, and the promised seed of Abraham (chap. iii.-vii.).

"An high priest," typified especially by the two high priests, Aaron and Melchisedec, as the one was "taken from among *men*," and the other "made like unto the Son of God;" for these are the two foundation-points on which the all-sufficiency of the priesthood rests. And Jesus is our exquisitely perfect high priest, because he not only stands between us and God, but unites both God and man in his own person, being himself of one nature with *both*. "Such an high priest," then, we have. Nor can we sufficiently admire the wisdom given to this Apostle in laying the foundation of the priesthood of Jesus, in the opening chapters of the Epistle, in his divinity and humanity.

All, indeed, that we can sum up from the first seven chapters goes into this "*such*;" but pre-eminently that he is Son of God and Son of Man. "We have *such* an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

"Such an high priest became us" (chap. vii. 26), who is "made higher than the heavens." This is his glorious position; a dignity never given to an angel, for, "to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand?" (Heb. i. 13). No, it is the place of honour "reserved in heaven" for Jesus. "The Lord

said unto my Lord, Sit *thou* at my right hand," (Ps. cx. i). It is the Son's own place—"set down *with my Father* in his throne," (Rev. iii. 21). "Set on the right hand of the throne of *the Majesty* in the heavens." And how beautiful to see the Father making the Son a partaker of his majesty;—"honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him," (Ps. xxi. 5; xcvi. 6).

"IN THE HEAVENS."

It is a glimpse, as it were, into the heavenly tabernacle, the dwelling-place of Jehovah, who "stretcheth out *the heavens* as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in," (Isa. xl. 22). How different from the small tent of boards with bars and sockets, which formed the tabernacle Moses reared of old, is this "true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man,"—the very "heaven of heavens!"

Thither our High Priest is gone, to be "a minister of the sanctuary," or as it is in the margin, of the "holy things," which may perhaps point us to the *work* in which he is occupied there, while "the tabernacle" tells of the *locality*. And most truly blessed indeed it is to have our hearts directed to think of him as "in the heavens." Too often, alas! the poor inquiring sinner is sent only to "the foot of the cross," where he is bidden to live and die, gazing ever upon the crucified one. But truly Jesus is no longer on the cross, and the anxious soul will seek him there in vain. As the angel

said to those who sought him in the sepulchre, "He is not here, but is risen," so it may be said to those who seek him on the cross, "He is not here"—he is ascended—he is "in the heavens" at the right hand of God. The forsaken cross is like the empty sepulchre to all who, like Mary, are seeking for Jesus; and they, like her, will stand without, "weeping," till they find "*Him* whom their soul loveth," (John xx. 11-13).

Look up, then, and see Jesus "in the heavens." *He* is there, and there the eye of faith must follow him. For although it was upon the cross that Jesus died and made atonement for our sins, without which no sinner could have life, yet it is not to his sacrificial work of atonement wrought out down here on earth, that the Apostle directs us in this *summing up*, but rather to the carrying on of his priestly work "in the heavens." Wherever Jesus himself is, there the brightest glory centres. And he is in "the true tabernacle,"—"in the heavens."

Oh, it is this that makes our religion so elevating, so sublimating, so soul-quickening. "Seek those things which are above, *where Christ sitteth* on the right hand of God," (Col. iii. 1).

No temple made with hands
His place of service is;
In heaven itself he stands,
An heavenly priesthood his, &c.

"We have such an high priest . . . *in the heavens.*"

It is of vast importance to mark the locality. But oh, it is more important still to look to Him who fills it. It is on Jesus we are to gaze—our high priest, *and our "minister."*

Little is that ministry of his understood or valued as it should be. Little do we too often think what we mean when we say, we have "*a minister*" in the heavens. It is no mere empty title that Jesus bears. The very word implies, "one who is actively engaged in a real work." Thus the angels are "ministering spirits sent forth to *minister*," (Heb. i. 7-14). Angels are not sitting in heaven with their hands idly folded, theirs is ministry, *i. e.* real service. "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that *do* his commandments:"—"ye ministers of his that *do* his pleasure," (Ps. ciii. 20, 21).

Again, magistrates are ministers, "they are God's ministers, *attending continually* upon this very thing," (Rom. xiii. 1-6). This is no nominal thing, it is constant work. (Comp. also 2 Cor. ix. 12; Phil. ii. 17, 25, 30; Acts xiii. 2, where the same word is used for the service which Paul either rendered himself, or had rendered to him.)

The ministry of the priesthood is especially set forth in Scripture as a constant, daily service, a continual waiting on the altar, (Num. iii. 3-10; Exod. xxviii. 1-4; Luke i. 8, 9, 23).

Everywhere, ministry signifies a real work. And it is our vast, unutterable privilege to know that it is such

a work that Jesus is engaged in for us in the heavenly sanctuary. Day by day, hour by hour, yea, *at this very moment, Jesus is ministering!* We may often forget it, while looking at the things which are seen and temporal, but faith ought to grasp the ever-present reality at all times. For it is every moment true that “we have a minister.” It is spoken in the present tense, to tell us it is true *now*. Yes, there is a sanctuary still, there is a tabernacle still, there is a high priest still, and there is a ministry still. “We *have* such an high priest, &c., a minister of the sanctuary.” It is true *now*. He is ministering *now*. (Comp. Exod. xxviii. 29, 30, “a memorial before the Lord *continually*,” &c.)

It would be overpowering indeed to think of these ministrations of the heavenly sanctuary, were not our high priest the Son of God, and one with God. It were otherwise a burden he could not bear. If we think only of the prayers presented to him daily in secret and in the family, or of the hourly dealings that many souls have with him (such as are restored “every moment”); or of the Sabbath-days when whole assemblies confess their sin, offer sacrifices of praise, present their supplications, &c., and all within a few short hours—multitudes of saints and sinners all to be attended to! we feel at once constrained to cry out, What a burden! Nor can we truly estimate it, for we know not the numbers of souls that, Nicodemus-like, go in secret unto

Jesus. But when our Church Missionary Society *alone* can number 17,136 communicants, it helps us to realise in some faint measure how strong that "nail in a sure place" must be, which can bear to have such a multitude of "vessels of mercy" hung upon him, (Isa. xxii. 23, 24). The one nation of Israel alone, was a burden Moses could not endure, as he said unto the Lord, "Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?" &c. (Num. xi. 11-14; Exod. xviii.; Deut. i. 9-12).

Yet the Mediator of the new covenant can bear the burden of the saved sinners throughout *the world!* and he "fainteth not, neither is weary," for he is with God, and *is God*. Jesus, then, "his own self," the God-man, our great high priest, is in heaven, *ministering* for us. Is it not a glorious summing up that the Apostle has arrived at? Is there not a special glory hung around these two verses, drawing us, as it were, into the very focus of heavenly blessings? Does not the sight of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary rivet every eye? "Lord, increase our faith."

THE EARTHLY PRIESTHOOD CONTRASTED WITH THE HEAVENLY.

VER. 3-6. "FOR EVERY HIGH PRIEST IS ORDAINED TO OFFER GIFTS
AND SACRIFICES: WHEREFORE IT IS OF NECESSITY THAT THIS
MAN HAVE SOMEWHAT ALSO TO OFFER. FOR IF HE WERE ON

EARTH, HE SHOULD NOT BE A PRIEST, SEEING THAT THERE ARE PRIESTS THAT OFFER GIFTS ACCORDING TO THE LAW: WHO SERVE UNTO THE EXAMPLE AND SHADOW OF HEAVENLY THINGS, AS MOSES WAS ADMONISHED OF GOD WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO MAKE THE TABERNACLE: FOR, SEE (SAITH HE) THAT THOU MAKE ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN SHEWED TO THEE IN THE MOUNT. BUT NOW HATH HE OBTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY, BY HOW MUCH ALSO HE IS THE MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED UPON BETTER PROMISES."

It is so manifestly self-evident, that the human copy of the divine original *must* have been marked by infinite inferiority, that it were a waste of words to try to prove it. "As it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it," (Exod. xxvii. 8; xxv. 9-40; xxvi. 30; Num. viii. 4). The whole thing, as regards the making of the tabernacle, and the offering up of gifts and sacrifices in it, was but a "shadow" or figure of better things to come; a visible representation carried on down here *on earth* of the great purposes of Jehovah in Jesus, whose priesthood is altogether *heavenly*. The earthly priests "offer gifts according to the law." "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt-offering," &c. (Lev. vi. 8-13). "And this is the law of the meat-offering," &c. (Lev. vi. 14-23). And so on. They were fleshly rites and carnal ordinances, a mere shadow or type of the heavenly things. Jesus, therefore, the heavenly high priest, *offered them not*. He *did* offer, indeed, both gifts and sacrifices, otherwise

he would not have been a true high priest, (ver. 3). But oh ! what offerings were his. First, his whole life on earth was a continued series of offerings most acceptable unto God. "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to *do* thy will, O my God," &c. (Ps. xl. 7, 8). These doings of his Father's will, of which he makes such constant mention in the Gospel of John, were the sacrifices and offerings God *did* "desire:" and his life was full of them. We little know how sweet a savour was ascending to the Father while the Son was suffering here. His prayers were offerings, and offerings that were "always" accepted, (Heb. v. 7; John xi. 42; xvii. &c.); and his praises too—"Father, I thank thee!" &c. (John xi. 41; Matt. xxvi. 30). Perhaps even beyond these outward expressions, were the forthputtings of his heart's deepest affections, so significantly symbolised by the "inwards" of the burnt-offering—all burnt, all consumed, (Lev. i. 9). Then his death—oh what an offering was this! Words cannot tell. "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given *himself* for us, an *offering* and a *sacrifice* to God for a sweet-smelling savour," (Eph. v. 2). The mysteries of his death are untold, unfathomable. The sun hid itself, the earth trembled, all creation felt it; but those who have read the gospel accounts of it the oftenest, and have pondered the most closely the amazing reality, will probably be the readiest to own how little they yet know *of the offerings* of

their great High Priest in heaven. Nor is this all. "He ever liveth to make intercession." Here is the carrying on of his priestly work still. This intercession, writes Owen, "compriseth the whole care and all the actings of Christ as our high priest with God in behalf of the Church. It is, therefore, the immediate spring of all his gracious communications unto us. Whatever apprehensions we may attain of the manner of it, the *thing itself* is the centre of our faith, hope, and consolation."

There is yet something beside even this, for he is gone into heaven "*to appear* in the presence of God for us," (Heb. ix. 24). He is there to present the most wondrous of all offerings, — his risen body, his life *brought out of death* — "who is even at the right hand of God," (Rom. viii. 34), as the risen One. He is there as the Great Shepherd of the sheep "brought again from the dead," "through the blood of the everlasting covenant," (Heb. xiii. 20). This continual presenting of himself before God in the heavens, perpetuates the offering of himself for ever. "This man," therefore, has indeed "*somewhat to offer!*" (ver. 3). All that he is, all that he has done, all that he is doing still, — all this forms his offering!

And he offers more. His people are living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God; and he offers *them* or brings *them* to God, (Rom. xii. 1; xv. 16). *They* offer gifts, and "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable in God by

Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. ii. 5); they offer prayers and praises, works and labours of love,—“the sacrifice of thanksgiving,” &c., and these he brings to God, day by day, hour by hour, yea, as often as they bring them to him, (Heb. xiii. 15, 16; Ps. cxvi. 17; Phil. ii. 17; iv. 18). It is therefore a continual series of offerings, that he has to be continually *bringing unto God*. What a blessed occupation! Jesus is incessantly bringing nigh to His father “a sweet-smelling savour,” filling the holy place above with fragrance inconceivably sweet.

So “excellent” is his ministry;—so much “*more excellent*” than that of the priests on earth! For “he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises,” “that in all things he might have the pre-eminence,” (Col. i. 18). The excelling glories of this new and better covenant are triumphantly set forth in 2 Cor. iii. 6, &c., (for the word “testament” might there as well as here be better rendered covenant). “If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?” The first covenant was good, but the second “better;” the first had a glory of its own, but the second did “exceed in glory.” For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this

respect, by reason of the glory that *excelleth*. For if that which was done away was glorious, *much more* that which *remaineth* is glorious.

The first covenant "decayeth and waxeth old, and is ready to vanish away," (Heb. viii. 13); but the new covenant, of which Jesus is the Mediator, "*remaineth*." For "this man, *because he* ('*remaineth*,' or) continueth ever," (for it is the same word in the original) "hath an unchangeable priesthood," (chap. vii. 24).

In all these various respects, therefore, in which the Apostle has proved that the second covenant is "much more" glorious than the first, he has powerfully shewn the contrast between the priests on the *earth*, and our High Priest in the *heavens*.

The "better promises" upon which this "better covenant" was established, seem to have been generally understood of the spiritual blessings of the new covenant as contrasted with the temporal and temporary blessings of the old. But the promises of temporal prosperity made to Israel, were not in any sense the groundwork on which their covenant was established to them. Is it not far more likely that the "promises" of the first covenant were those between God and Israel, in Exod. xix. and xxiv.? There in the wilderness of Sinai, when Moses had gone up unto God, "the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the

Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation," (Exod. xix. 3-6). "And Moses came, and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," (ver. 7, 8).

And again, Moses "took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words," (Exod. xxiv. 7, 8).

Here was in very deed the ratifying of the covenant, on the promise of Israel that they would keep it. But when the second covenant was established, it was on the promise of Jesus that *He* would keep it. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," (Ps. xl. 6-8, with Heb. x. 7, 9). Or, if viewed in reference still to Israel, the promise of keeping it is made *for* them by one able to secure that it *shall be* kept. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their

hearts, that *they shall not depart* from me," (Jer. xxxii. 40). The promise is no longer man's but God's; the mediator is no longer Moses, but Jesus. How much "better" then this new covenant!

THE FIRST COVENANT FAULTY.

VER. 7-9. "FOR IF THAT FIRST COVENANT HAD BEEN FAULTLESS, THEN SHOULD NO PLACE HAVE BEEN SOUGHT FOR THE SECOND. FOR FINDING FAULT WITH THEM, HE SAITH, BEHOLD, THE DAYS COME, SAITH THE LORD, WHEN I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH: NOT ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT THAT I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS IN THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; BECAUSE THEY CONTINUED NOT IN MY COVENANT, AND I REGARDED THEM NOT, SAITH THE LORD."

If there is one subject in which as sinners we are more deeply interested than another, it is in that covenant or arrangement which God has made with men *as sinners*, for the putting away of their sins through the offering of life in their stead;—the subject which occupies the remainder of the eighth, the whole of the ninth, and part of the tenth chapters of this Epistle.

May the Lord the Spirit lead many souls into a deeper appreciation of their vast and untold privileges, as participators in the blessings of this new and better covenant!

"If that first covenant had been faultless, then should

no place have been sought for the second." Here are *two* covenants, a first and a second • and no others are alluded to throughout the Epistle. The first is that made with Israel in the wilderness of Sinai, as God was leading them out of the land of Egypt, into the land of promised inheritance. It was good and "glorious" (2 Cor. iii.), but still it was not "faultless." It brought in no "perfection," (chap. vii. 2); but rather was disannulled, "for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof," (chap. vii. 18, 19). "It was weak through the flesh," (Rom. viii. 3).

With willing spirits the people of Israel exclaimed on hearing it, "All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient," (Exod. xxiv. 7). But they knew not as yet the weakness of the flesh, (Matt. xxvi. 41). They imagined that they could keep the covenant; but "they *continued not*" in it, (Heb. viii. 9). "They soon forgot his works;" "they *kept not* the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they *steadfast* in his covenant," (Ps. lxxviii. 9, 10, 37). The barrenness of their land is a standing witness against their unfaithfulness to the covenant; for the answer to be given to the nations who inquire concerning it is this, — "They have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt," (Deut. xxix. 9-28). The whole book of Jeremiah tells of their

unfaithfulness to their covenant-keeping God: "The house of Israel and the house of Judah have *broken my covenant*, which I made with their fathers." (See Jer. xi. 1-11; xxii. 8, 9; xxxiv. 12-20, &c. &c.) The burden of the book of Judges is the same: "The anger of the Lord was not against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice, I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died," &c. (Judges ii. 1-5, 20-23). And Ezekiel is commissioned to bear the same message of reproof: "For thus saith the Lord God, I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in *breaking the covenant*," (Ezek. xvi. 59). (Comp. also Mal. ii. 8; Deut. xxxi. 16-20.)

"They continued not in my covenant," is indeed the sad story of Israel's history, from the days of Moses even until now. And therefore God finds fault with the imperfections of such a state of things. "They continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord."

This does not mean (as one might almost have been led to believe, from the way in which this covenant has been severed from Israel, and made over to the Christian Church, by many of our soundest divines), that Israel is for ever cast off from God's favour and regard. "Hath God cast away his people? God for-

bid." "God hath *not* cast away his people," (Rom. xi. 1, 2). Owen has given a beautiful meaning to the Hebrew words used by Jeremiah, in this quotation (see Jer. xxxi. 32); he says, "It is as much as if it had said, 'I dealt with them as a husband with a wife that breaketh covenant.'" And God has fully left on record what is his manner of dealing with his unfaithful "wife." "For Israel hath not been forsaken (lit. '*widowed*'), nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel," (Jer. li. 5). (See also Ezek. xvi. 59-62; Jer. iii. 1-22.) No, Israel is "broken off," but not "cast away." "God is able to graft them in again," and he will (Rom. xi. 16, 17, 23). He did not find fault with the first covenant, without a place being "sought for the second."

THE PERFECTION OF THE SECOND COVENANT.

VER. 10-13. "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAITH THE LORD; I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MIND, AND WRITE THEM IN THEIR HEARTS: AND I WILL BE TO THEM A GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE TO ME A PEOPLE: AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERY MAN HIS NEIGHBOUR, AND EVERY MAN HIS BROTHER, SAYING, KNOW THE LORD: FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST. FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR UNRIGHTOUSNESS, AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR INIQUITIES WILL I REMEMBER NO MORE. IN THAT HE SAITH, A NEW COVENANT, HE HATH MADE THE FIRST OLD. NOW THAT WHICH DECAYETH AND WAXETH OLD IS READY TO VANISH AWAY."

"The gifts and calling of God are without repentance," (Rom. xi. 29). "For I am the Lord, I change not: therefore ye sons of *Jacob* are not consumed," (Mal. iii. 6). As the first covenant was with Israel, so is the second. "I will make a new covenant with the house of *Israel*, and with the house of *Judah*." It is impossible to read through the chapter in Jeremiah in which this passage occurs, without seeing that it is the very same people who were then in captivity for their breaking of the former covenant, to whom the promises of restoration are made, and the promise of the "new covenant." (See Jer. xxxi., with chaps. xxx. and xxxii. and xxxiii.) And we know that these promises were not fulfilled at their restoration from Babylon, because only "the house of Judah" was carried captive there; and the new covenant is to be made as much with the house of *Israel* as of Judah. The days are therefore yet to come for the fulfilling of this glorious covenant in all its length and breadth and universality to Israel. And we, in the meantime, have come in for our share in this overflowing tide of covenant blessing. For whilst Israel has been "broken off," we have been "grafted in among (marg. 'for') them," and have been made partakers "of the root and fatness of the olive-tree," (Rom. xi. 17). And from the time that the Jews rejected Jesus, and the Gospel has been preached unto the Gentiles, we have had the promises and excelling glories of the new covenant virtually made

over to us. Alas! that we should have prized and understood its value so little. Truly, its fulness of perfection we cannot fathom; but we ought to see *enough* of it to lead our souls into perfect rest in Jesus; for,

1st, It secures holiness to us. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. *For* what the law *could not do*, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: *that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit," (Rom. viii. 1-4). Here is the full unfolding of the wondrous method God has taken, for securing the holiness of his covenant people, by the indwelling of the Spirit of holiness. "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, . . . written not with ink, but with *the Spirit* of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of *the heart*," (2 Cor. iii. 3).

It is this work of the Spirit in the heart which constrains us to cry out with David, "O how I *love* thy law! it is my meditation all the day. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and

silver," &c. (Ps. cxix. 97, 72). And with Paul, "I *delight* in the law of God after the inward man," (Rom. vii. 22). The whole work of sanctification is involved in it: it promises that we shall be holy!

2d, It undertakes for our covenant relationship with God. "I *will* be to them a God, and they *shall* be to me a people." "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," (2 Cor. vi. 18). "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and will be their God, and they shall be my people," (2 Cor. vi. 16). To have God for "our *own* God," is such a privilege as we know not the thousandth part of as yet, for we must know *what* God is, ere we can duly estimate what he can be to us. Oh, then, what an eternity of bliss lies treasured up for us in the few words, "I will be to them a *God!*"

"Whatever I am in myself, that will I be to them. How we need increase of faith to receive this amazing promise! Few dare to live upon it. It is a vastness of divine bounty, which exceeds our utmost thoughts. We shrink from appropriating it: we try to live on something less. . . . But herein lies the exceeding greatness and preciousness of the promise, that it includes every other promise of particular blessedness, and gives it in its uncreated spring." (Extracts from Goode's "Better Covenant"). "I will be to them a God." "Here lies the eternal spring of the infinite treasures

of the supplies of the Church here and for ever." (Owen.) Be our need what it may, he is "a GOD" to supply that very thing. Oh for deep humility and reverential awe, whilst we boldly contemplate this wonder of wonders—a triune God making *himself* over to *us* in a covenant never to be broken!

But it involves, on the other hand, a full surrender of ourselves unto him. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God, in your body, and in your spirit, *which are God's*," (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). "Which in time past were not a people, but are now *the people of God*," (1 Pet. ii. 9, 10). And the relationship is sure and lasting, for God himself undertakes for us:—"they *shall be* to me a people." All is secured in the person of the mediating party in this covenant, even in Jesus! Therefore Paul was not afraid to say, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to *separate us* from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Rom. viii. 38, 39). In the new covenant there is neither "condemnation," nor "separation;" for as Jesus himself has made known to us, in words whose meaning lies far beyond us, we are brought through him into *union* with God! "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made *per-*

fect in one," (John xvii. 21, 23). Oh the perfection of the new covenant, bringing us into *such* relationship with God !

3dly, It promises us divine teaching and enlightening. "All shall know me," &c. (ver. 11). "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. And ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him," (1 John ii. 20, 27). Things that never could have entered into our natural minds are revealed to us by the Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 9-12); for he testifies of Jesus: and the essence of the promise lies in this, that it is knowing the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, (John xvii. 3). "All shall know *me*." "That I may know him," was the fervent prayer of this Apostle, who "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus," counted all things but loss, (Phil. iii. 8, 10). And the desire is met by the covenant promise, "All shall *know me*."

And lastly, it involves the entire remission of sin. "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," (ver. 12). "You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, *having forgiven you all trespasses*; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing

it to his cross," (Col. ii. 13, 14). "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," (1 John i. 5-9). "Thy sins be *forgiven* thee," (Matt. ix. 2), *i.e.* dismissed or sent away, for such is the force of the original words, "I will remember 'them' no more."

There is *immense* fulness in the words of the promise, as if God would shew us how well he knows how to provide for all our felt sense of need. He does not simply say "sins," though that might have been enough, but classes our sins under three different heads, "unrighteousness," "sins," and "iniquities." And is not this as much as to say, "I know them *all*, in all their different phases and degrees, and I have provided in the covenant for the putting *all* away?"

Oh if our souls did but enter into the fulness of the blessing treasured up for us in this covenant, what rest, what peace might be ours! The Lord lead us into a deeper realisation of all that it secures to us!

And while enjoying it for ourselves in communion with the "little flock" of the elect now on earth, let us ponder the yet future manifestation of covenant blessedness in reserve for Israel. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. *And so all Israel* shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion

the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: *for this is my covenant unto them*, when I shall take away their sins," (Rom. xi. 25-27). Then will all the promises be fulfilled to them, which we now appropriate (sometimes too exclusively) to ourselves.

1st, "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts," (Jer. xxxi. 33). "And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes," &c. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27). For Israel shall be a holy people: "thy people also shall be all righteous," (Isa. lx. 21). The blessing of Ps. cxix. I will be theirs in fulness: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord," yea, when Jehovah has written that law in their *hearts*, their whole *life* will be but the acting out of that psalm! "I will put my law *in their inward parts*"—this will be Ps. xl. 8, reflected in all, on earth as well as in heaven;—"I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart." Then it will be no longer the *broken* law in the hands of the mediator Moses (*a man*), as in Deut. ix. 15-17, but the *kept* law in the ark (typical of Christ Jesus), as in Deut. x. 1-5. Oh, how bright and cheering the prospect of a coming day, when every Israelite shall be as a tree planted by the rivers of waters, delighting in the law

of the Lord, and meditating therein day and night! (Ps. i. 1-3). And when *they*, too, shall be brought into "new covenant" relationship with God: as it is written—

2dly, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people," (Jer. xxxi. 33). Amongst the promises awaiting them in their future restoration, this one stands forth with great pre-eminence. "I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." "My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people," (Zech. xiii. 9; Ezek. xxxvii. 23, 27; xiv. 11; xxxiv. 30, 31; xxxvi. 28; Jer. xxx. 22; xxxi. 1; xxxii. 27; Zech. viii. 8; Hos. ii. 23). The truth is one that God has loved to repeat and dwell upon. And no wonder, for he knows the eternity of bliss he is conferring on his people, in giving them *himself* to be "their God;" and he has chosen to take *them* "to be a special people unto himself," his "*peculiar treasure!*" (Deut. vii. 6-9; Exod. xix. 5). More than one hundred times does he call them "*my people*," in addressing them by his prophets. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up *my jewels*," (Mal. iii. 17).

It is too precious a thought to be passed over, that in this promise the Hebrew word is *Elohim*, "I will be their Elohim," literally, their *Gods*, for it is the plural word, intimating, that all that a triune God can be, *that* God *will be* to his people. It is as if nothing

should be left out, that could fill our cup with the richest good.

3dly, "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord," (Jer. xxxi. 34). Formerly the command was for Jewish parents to teach the law diligently to their children (Deut. vi. 7); the grand office of Moses was to be their *lawgiver* (Deut. xxxiii. 4); the Levites were to "teach" God's judgments unto Jacob, and his law unto Israel (Deut. xxxiii. 10); and God's prophets were sent from time to time to be his messengers, when all other teaching had failed. But "the days come" when "*they shall all know me*, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." "Know *me*," not the law merely, nor the precepts, nor the commandments, but "*me*." God knows that access into his presence *through the veil* is what our souls require for perfect happiness. And he veiled himself only for a season. "Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. *Nevertheless*, when it shall turn to the Lord, *the veil shall be taken away*," (2 Cor. iii. 15, 16). Then all shall *know the Lord!* "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children," (Isa. liv. 13). This will be their ground of holy glorying: "Let him that glorieth glory *in this*, that he

understandeth and *knoweth me*," (Jer. ix. 24). Ezekiel dwells very much on their being brought to know their God after their restoration; not fewer than fifty times does he refer to it, and on thirteen occasions making them direct promises. "Ye shall *know* that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves," (Ezek. xxxvii. 13, 14). "They shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord," (Ezek. xxxiv. 27; xvi. 62; xx. 42-44; xxxix. 22-28, &c.).

We may have wondered, perhaps, in our ordinary reading of the prophecies, to have met with the constant repetition of expressions such as these. But we value rather than wonder at them, when we discover in them the promises of the new covenant to Israel, which abound in the book of the *Old* Testament (or covenant). The pages of the prophets teem with the blessings of the new covenant, as it *is to be* made with Israel, "After those days, saith the Lord," How blessed then "the people that know the joyful sound!" (Ps. lxxxix. 15). Then, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," (Isa. xi. 9; Hab. ii. 14).

And lastly, the promise runs, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. xxxi. 34), for "in those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be *none*; and the sins of Judah, and

they shall *not be found*," (Jer. l. 20). "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee," (Isa. xlv. 21, 22). "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." And why?—for "thou wilt perform the truth *unto Jacob*," &c. (Mic. vii. 18, 19, 20). So faithful is God to the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that although Israel is now "broken off," for their unbelief, they shall be "grafted in" again: for they are still as much as ever, "beloved for the fathers' sakes," (Rom. xi. 28). And we have yet to learn how truly God *is God*, in the covenant he has made with man. Its immensity, its perpetuity, its *perfectness*, is worthy of him. Such then is the glance given here of the two covenants—the one faulty, the other perfect. The first being faulty, is allowed to wax old and decay; whilst the second being perfect, is subject to no change or alteration.

It is well worthy of careful notice, that when God speaks of *making* this new covenant with Israel and with Judah, he is not content, as it were, to use the ordinary word but as if to repeat his willingness to

give us "strong consolation," he uses the word *συντελεσω* (suntelesoo); "I will *perfect* a new covenant." &c. (ver. 8). Owen has remarked that it might be rendered "*perfect entirely*," inasmuch as the *συν* is intense. So wonderfully has it pleased God to secure to us this new covenant in its *fullest perfection*.

HEB. IX.

THE TEMPORARY CHARACTER OF THE FIRST COVENANT.

CHAP. IX. 1-10. "THEN VERILY THE FIRST COVENANT HAD ALSO ORDINANCES OF DIVINE SERVICE, AND A WORLDLY SANCTUARY. FOR THERE WAS A TABERNACLE MADE; THE FIRST, WHEREIN WAS THE CANDLESTICK, AND THE TABLE, AND THE SHEWBREAD; WHICH IS CALLED THE SANCTUARY. AND AFTER THE SECOND VEIL, THE TABERNACLE WHICH IS CALLED THE HOLIEST OF ALL; WHICH HAD THE GOLDEN CENSER, AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT OVERLAID ROUND ABOUT WITH GOLD, WHEREIN WAS THE GOLDEN POT THAT HAD MANNA, AND AARON'S ROD THAT BUDDED, AND THE TABLES OF THE COVENANT; AND OVER IT THE CHERUBIMS OF GLORY SHADOWING THE MERCY SEAT; OF WHICH WE CANNOT NOW SPEAK PARTICULARLY. NOW WHEN THESE THINGS WERE THUS ORDAINED, THE PRIESTS WENT ALWAYS INTO THE FIRST TABERNACLE, ACCOMPLISHING THE SERVICE OF GOD. BUT INTO THE SECOND WENT THE HIGH PRIEST ALONE ONCE EVERY YEAR, NOT WITHOUT BLOOD, WHICH HE OFFERED FOR HIMSELF, AND FOR THE ERRORS OF THE PEOPLE: THE HOLY GHOST THIS SIGNIFYING, THAT THE WAY INTO THE HOLIEST OF ALL WAS NOT YET MADE MANIFEST, WHILE AS THE FIRST TABERNACLE WAS YET STANDING: WHICH WAS A FIGURE FOR THE TIME THEN PRESENT, IN WHICH WERE OFFERED BOTH GIFTS AND SACRIFICES, THAT COULD NOT MAKE HIM THAT DID THE SERVICE PERFECT, AS PERTAINING TO THE CONSCIENCE; WHICH STOOD ONLY IN MEATS AND DRINKS, AND DIVERS WASHINGS, AND CARNAL ORDINANCES, IMPOSED ON THEM UNTIL THE TIME OF REFORMATION."

Of "the true tabernacle," and heavenly "sanctuary," wherein our great High Priest ministers as the mediator of the *new* covenant, the Apostle had already spoken in chap. viii. 1, 2. Now he speaks of the tabernacle and sanctuary of the "*first*" covenant; shewing that while the former was heavenly and eternal, this latter was worldly, carnal, perishing, and temporary; designed to last only "until the time of reformation." "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made," &c. Of this "tabernacle" the Apostle gives a rapid sketch; not a careful description, for that is not in the least his object here. He simply and briefly alludes to the locality, very probably with a view of calling the attention of Gentile Christians to its several parts, as they could have no knowledge of it, save through the Jewish Scriptures; and in these few words he brings the whole thing vividly before the mind.

To dwell at all, upon what St Paul expressly says *he* could *not* then dwell upon, is manifestly to make a digression from the subject-matter of the Epistle. Yet for the sake of the very precious truths contained in these verses (ver. 2-5), they cannot be altogether passed over.

DIGRESSION : VER. 2-5.

1. "There was a *tabernacle* made." Of this "taber-

nacle," the leading idea was that of a "tent of meeting" between God and man. According to Professor Fairbairn, the words which in our English version are rendered "tabernacle of the congregation," would be much more correctly rendered "tent of meeting," which would at once have expressed the idea. He writes, "We may state its immediate object and design to have been *the bringing of God near to the Israelites* in his true character, and keeping up an intercourse between him and them;" adding, that it was not where the children of Israel were to assemble, any further than as this was a means to a higher end, viz., that "it formed for them all the one point of contact, and channel of intercourse between heaven and earth. This is clearly brought out in Exod. xxix. 42, 43." He also states that in Exod. xxv. 8, the command is first given generally: "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." *Then* the different parts are all minutely described; and afterwards the general design is again indicated in Exod. xxix. 45, 46, "And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God."

In this view of the tabernacle, its division into two parts is full of the deepest significance. For while in the "first," there was a setting forth of that *communion* which God then had with his people Israel, there was in "the holiest of all," a setting forth of that *unity* which belongs peculiarly to our own dis-

pensation, now that believers are taken *into* Christ, and are made *one* with Christ. Nothing could possibly have expressed the reality more truthfully in type, than the arrangement made by God to this end in the division of the "tent of meeting."

2. "The first, wherein was the *candlestick*." The candlestick was a foreshadowing of Christ in his body the church. "The seven candlesticks . . . are the seven churches," (Rev. i. 20). The candlestick is not said to be Christ, though He is the light of it: but it is Christ *in* his body mystical, the branches being all of one beaten piece of gold with itself, shewing that believers are the vitally united members of his body. Believer, learn hence with what light you should shine! "*His* glory shall be *seen upon thee*," (Isa. lx. 2). It was the daily work of the priests of old to light the lamps morning and evening; does not this suggest to us that the lamps need daily trimming that our light may shine before men? (Matt. v. 16; Phil. ii. 15). When it is said that the lamps were lighted, or as it is in the margin, caused *to ascend*, (Exod. xxvii. 20; xxx. 8), does not this whisper in our ear that while our light should "give light" to all around, it should yet burn primarily heavenward and Godward? is it not this *singleness* of heart that we so greatly need, doing all as "unto the Lord?" We read too of this candlestick that it burned "*alway*;" but it is most important to observe, that it burned

only so long as it was continually fed with fresh supplies of oil, and this oil was brought for the purpose by "*the children of Israel*," (Exod. xxvii. 20, 21; Lev. xxiv. 2).

Constant renewal was needed; and in this we see the grand point of difference between the holy and the most holy. Within the veil all was perfect, no renewing was necessary; all remained unchanged from year to year. But a different lesson was taught in the holy place; and it is seen again in,

3. "The table and the shewbread." For as the olive was brought by the people to supply the candlestick, so the flour was provided by them for the shewbread, (Lev. xxiv. 8). "Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being *taken from the children of Israel* by an everlasting covenant." The idea in the "shewbread," as in the candlestick, seems very clearly to have been that of communion: "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread," (1 Cor. x. 16, 17, 18). Every Sabbath as the new supply of bread was brought in, the other loaves were eaten by the priests in the holy place (Lev. xxiv. 9), most strikingly exhibiting communion with God, for typically *he* had fed upon the same bread already; "an offering made by fire unto the Lord," (Lev. xxiv. 7). "Truly our

fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, (1 John i. 3). John wrote as if he had these sanctuary thoughts all present to his mind—"the fellowship," "the light," and "the blood." "If we walk in *the light*, as he is in the light, we have *fellowship* one with another, and *the blood* of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," (1 John i. 7). The bread eaten in the holy place with the light of the candlestick shining upon it ("the blood" having been previously offered at the altar), is vividly before the Apostle's mind. Oh, to know more, and to live more habitually in this sanctuary atmosphere of spiritual realities!

4. "And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all; which had the golden censer," &c. (ver. 3, 4). Strictly speaking, it would seem as if the "golden censer" had more properly belonged to the incense altar which stood without the veil in the holy place. But as the Apostle does not even stop to mention that altar, he most probably alludes only to the use made of "the golden censer" on the day of atonement (see Lev. xvi. 12, 13): "And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he *die not*."

Without the golden censer, Aaron could not have entered within the veil, so that it might justly enough be viewed as proper to it.

5. "And *the ark* of the covenant," &c. (ver. 4). This was the very symbol of the new and better covenant, laid up before the Lord in token of a covenant never to be broken, and to undergo no change: its very name proclaimed its deep and sacred meaning—"the ark *of the covenant!*" It is remarkable how emphatically the idea of safety and continuance is connected with it, and with its accompaniments.

(1st.) "The golden pot that had manna." Of this it is written, "This is the thing which the Lord commandeth, Fill an omer of it *to be kept* for your generations. . . . And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord *to be kept* for your generations. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony, *to be kept*," (Exod. xvi. 32-34).

(2d.) "Aaron's rod that budded." Of this we read, "The Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, *to be kept* for a token against the rebels," (Num. xvii. 10).

(3d.) "The tables of the covenant." Of these it is recorded by Moses, "I made an ark of shittim-wood, . . . and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and *there they be*, as the Lord commanded me," (Deut. x. 5).

And lastly, "Over it" (*i. e.* the ark) "the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat." From Exod. xxv. 17-22, it is plain that the ark, and mercy-seat, and the cherubims, were almost regarded as one whole. The mercy-seat was the covering of the ark, and the cherubims were of one piece with the mercy-seat. There was within that sacred spot, scarcely ever seen by any eye but God's, a most striking and beautiful representation of the unity of Jesus with his redeemed ones;—"perfect in one;" "one in us," (John xvii. 21-23); partakers of the very "glory" of Jesus!

That the *general form* of the cherubims was that of a *man*, seems evident from Ezekiel's description of them, in chap. i. 4, 5, "This was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man." These are almost the words afterwards used to describe the Lord Jesus as *he* appeared unto him: "Upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it," (ver. 26). But the point of special interest in connexion with the passage in Hebrews is this. Precisely from the same spot whence Ezekiel saw the Lord, he saw also the cherubim, as it is written: "Behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, *out of the midst of the fire.*" (Compare with this ver. 27, where "the colour of amber" is that which assumes the form and appearance of the "Man").

"Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures," they too having the appearance of a man.

In the midst of the same blaze of light where Jesus was, there was to be seen likewise the four living creatures! In the holiest of all, where the glory of Jehovah shone forth with unearthly splendour, stood the cherubim of glory. Oh what wondrous perfection shall be ours, when we shall be presented "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy!" (Jude 24)—undazzled by the splendour, and without one fear of spot, or blemish, or any such thing being discovered upon us, to tarnish the brilliancy of the glory. Surely the cherubim may well be called "cherubims of glory."

The Apostle, however, cannot linger over these themes, blessed and glorious as they are, for his mind and thoughts are all pre-occupied. It is not the tabernacle that engrosses him, *but the high priest*. "We cannot stay to speak particularly of the place, we must look to *the person*." Such was ever the character of his teaching.

Having briefly spoken of the arrangements of the tabernacle, he goes on to shew that they were altogether of a temporary character, (ver. 6-10). The tabernacle services were of two kinds:—1st, The *daily* service, accomplished by the priests, who had daily access into "the first tabernacle" for this very end, (Num. iv. 16; iii. 7, 8; xviii. 1-7). "Now when these

things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God." 2d. The *annual* service which took place on the great day of atonement when the high priest alone went into the holiest. "But into the second went the high priest alone once every year," &c. (See Lev. xvi. 17). "The Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark, that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat." "Once a year" only was atonement to be made there, (ver. 34). It is mainly from this prohibition that the imperfection and temporary character of the first covenant is inferred. For it was in that "holy place within the veil," that God had his dwelling-place; and the very object of the tabernacle was to furnish a tent of *meeting* between God and his people. It is therefore clear, that as long as a veil entirely concealed him from them, the meeting could be but partial, and God's design could be but partially accomplished. The Holy Ghost was signifying all the while, "that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." Something better was in view. It was "a figure *for the time then present*," and the ordinances and services connected with it were imposed only "*until the time* of reformation." Such were their

divers "washings" or baptisms (it is the same word in the original with ch. vi. 2), their meat and drink offerings, their laws about the clean and the unclean, &c., with which so large a part of the book of Leviticus is occupied. The "carnal" nature of these ordinances of itself strongly intimated their unsatisfying and temporary character. For when the gifts and sacrifices were offered, and the divers washings or baptisms were gone through, there had still been nothing to purge "*the conscience*," that "inward part" where the Lord God of truth desireth truth. David strongly felt this when he wrote, "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," (Ps. li. 16, 17).

How comforting it is to discover afresh from time to time how well God knows and understands us. Ministers oftentimes rest content with getting their people to attend the outward ordinances, or bidding them do some good work to effect their own salvation. But God does not mock the sinner so. He looks to the cravings of the inner man for peace, and he has regard to the gnawings of the guilty conscience, and he tells the heart-stricken sinner that on the day when *atonement* was made, even the high priest himself could not enter the holiest "*without blood*:" blood offered for

the people's sins as well his own, (ver. 7). "Into the second went the high priest alone once every year, NOT WITHOUT BLOOD."

"He shall take of the *blood* of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward: and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the *blood* with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people, and bring his *blood* within the veil, and do with *that blood* as he did with the *blood* of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat," (Lev. xvi. 14, 15). How deeply solemn! that mercy-seat stained afresh with blood from year to year—first the blood of a bullock for Aaron, then the blood of a goat for the people. But thus only could atonement be made for sin; the blood of the animal being taken *instead of* the life of the sinner, for "the blood is the life."

THE ETERNAL BENEFITS CONFERRED BY THE NEW COVENANT.

VER. 11-14. "BUT CHRIST BEING COME AN HIGH PRIEST OF GOOD THINGS TO COME, BY A GREATER AND MORE PERFECT TABERNACLE, NOT MADE WITH HANDS, THAT IS TO SAY, NOT OF THIS BUILDING; NEITHER BY THE BLOOD OF GOATS AND CALVES, BUT BY HIS OWN BLOOD, HE ENTERED IN ONCE INTO THE HOLY PLACE, HAVING OBTAINED ETERNAL REDEMPTION FOR US. FOR IF THE BLOOD OF BULLS AND OF GOATS, AND THE ASHES OF AN HEIFER SPRINKLING THE UNCLEAN, SANCTIFIETH, TO THE PURIFYING OF

THE FLESH : HOW MUCH MORE SHALL THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, WHO THROUGH THE ETERNAL SPIRIT OFFERED HIMSELF WITHOUT SPOT TO GOD, PURGE YOUR CONSCIENCE FROM DEAD WORKS TO SERVE THE LIVING GOD ?”

Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between these verses and those that went before. There it was, that “the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest ;”—that the tabernacle “was a figure for the time then present ;” and that its ordinances were imposed only “until the time of reformation.” All was temporary. But now, all is for eternity. Here is “eternal redemption,”—an “eternal inheritance” (ver. 15), “good things to come,”—and Christ offering himself “through the eternal Spirit” unto God. Eternity is stamped on every word ; and these eternal benefits come to us through the new and better covenant which is not to wax old and vanish away, as the first covenant did. Oh how much we owe to Jesus ! for it is He who has obtained it all.

“But *Christ* being come an high priest of good things to come,” &c. It is all his doing ; our eye is ever to be fixed on him. We are invited to glory in the vast superiority of his priesthood—for it is of value unutterable to us. The very tabernacle in which he ministers is “greater and more perfect,” even heaven itself. (Comp. ch. viii. 1, 2). And *he* does not offer in a tabernacle with a veil to hide God from him, so that he should only see his *Father* once a year. He does

not offer the blood of animals, the innocent victims of earth, which have never sinned, and suffer only for man's sin. He does not therefore need to go in and out as Aaron did on the day of atonement, to fetch first the blood of the bullock for himself, and then the blood of the goat for the people, (Lev. xvi. 14, 15). Oh no! "by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

"The entrance of Christ as our high priest into heaven was so great a thing as could be accomplished only *by his own blood*. No other sacrifice was sufficient to this end, (ch. x. 5-10). Men seldom rise in their thoughts to the greatness of this mystery. The ruin of religion *lies* in the *slight thoughts of men about the blood of Christ*. The contemplation of it uninterruptedly will be a part of our blessedness throughout eternity. But even here we can neither understand how great is salvation, nor be thankful for it, without a due consideration of the way whereby the Lord entered the holy place. And he will be the most humble and most fruitful Christian, whose faith is most conversant, and most exercised with it," (*Owen*).

Israel of old obtained redemption out of Egypt through the blood of the passover lamb, (Exod. xii.). But "*we* have redemption through *his* blood," (Eph. i. 7); being redeemed, not "with corruptible things as silver and gold, &c.; but with the *precious blood* of

Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). Oh, if we did but realise the fulness of redemption as already "*obtained*" for us, how we should triumph where now we faint! But the day is coming when redemption will be our ceaseless theme, as we cry before the Lamb, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," &c. (Rev. v. 9). And the "new song" sung in heaven will be echoed on earth, as it is written, "The Lord hath *redeemed* Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. *Therefore* they shall come and sing in the heights of Zion," &c. (Jer. xxxi. 11, 12; Isa. li. 9-11).

Ere since by faith I saw the stream
 Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
 And shall be till I die. (COWPER).

DIVINE COVENANTS REQUIRING DEATH.

CHAP. ix. 15-20.

There has been much discussion and controversy amongst commentators as to the true rendering of the words "testament" and "testator." They are here rendered throughout "covenant" and "covenanter," chiefly for the following reasons:—

1st, That the Greek word *diathēkē* is everywhere else in these chapters rendered "covenant," and there appears no necessity for a change in these verses.

2d, The *context* seems to require that it should be "covenant."

3d, The 20th verse is a quotation from Exod. xxiv. 8, where Moses says, "Behold the blood of the *covenant*," &c., plainly proving that *there* at least "covenant" is the true rendering. (The Heb. word is *B'rith*).

VER. 15-20. "AND FOR THIS CAUSE HE IS THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT, THAT BY MEANS OF DEATH, FOR THE REDEMPTION OF THE TRANSGRESSIONS THAT WERE UNDER THE FIRST COVENANT, THEY WHICH ARE CALLED MIGHT RECEIVE THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL INHERITANCE. FOR WHERE A COVENANT IS, THERE MUST ALSO OF NECESSITY BE THE DEATH OF THE COVENANTER. FOR A COVENANT IS *firm over the dead* :* OTHERWISE IT IS OF NO STRENGTH AT ALL WHILE THE COVENANTER LIVETH. WHEREUPON NEITHER THE FIRST COVENANT WAS DEDICATED WITHOUT BLOOD. FOR WHEN MOSES HAD SPOKEN EVERY PRECEPT TO ALL THE PEOPLE ACCORDING TO THE LAW, HE TOOK THE *blood* OF CALVES AND OF GOATS, WITH WATER, AND SCARLET WOOL, AND HYSSOP, AND SPRINKLED BOTH THE BOOK, AND ALL THE PEOPLE, SAYING, THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD HATH ENJOINED UNTO YOU."

It is unnecessary to go into the subject of covenants in general, to find the meaning of these words. The apostle has hitherto spoken but of two, the old and the new, and it is of the same two that he is speaking still, his object being to prove that they *must* be ratified by "blood." In covenants between man and man, this

* This reading is given from Tait's *Med. Hebraicae*. The word "men" not being found in the original at all, justifies some departure from the text.

may not have been required ; but "the terms used in the Hebrew in regard to making a covenant with God, prove that it was understood to be ratified by sacrifice, or that the death of a victim was necessary: (כָּרַת בְּרִית), *kārāth berith*, 'to cut a covenant;' . . . the allusion being to the victims offered in sacrifice and *cut in pieces* on occasion of entering into a covenant. (See Gen. xv. 10; Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19)." (Extract from Barnes on Hebrews).

Probably much of the difficulty that is felt about this passage has arisen from our want of an English word exactly expressing the meaning of the Greek *diathēkē*. Barnes says of it, "It means neither covenant nor will; neither compact nor legacy; neither agreement nor testament. . . . It denotes the arrangement, disposition, or ordering of things which God made in relation to men." And this unquestionably agrees with the root from which the word is derived. It occurs in its various forms in only four other places: Luke xxii. 29, "I appoint," &c., "as my Father *hath appointed*," &c.; Acts iii. 25, "the covenant which God *made*;" and Heb. viii. 10, x. 16, "the covenant that *I will make*," &c. (The word *diathēkē* itself occurs thirty-three times in the New Testament).

Moreover, it is remarkable that "the word properly expressive of a covenant or compact (*sunthēkē*), is *never* used in the New Testament." (Barnes).

It seems probable therefore that the sacred writers

purposely selected a word that represented God as making an appointment or *arrangement for* man. And if this be granted, how much of the difficulty vanishes!

His arrangement under the first covenant was, that "for the time then present" he would accept the life-blood of an animal offered in sacrifice, *in the stead* of the life of the sinner who offered it. Thus it is written in Lev. xvii. 11, "The life of the flesh is in the blood;" or, more correctly, "the *soul* (*nephesh*) of the flesh is in the blood;" "and I have given it to you upon the altar, to atone for your souls, for the blood atones through the soul (*nephesh*)."¹ It is as if it had said, "It is not the matter of the blood that atones, but the soul or life which resides in it; so that the soul of the offered victim atones for the soul of the man who offers it." (Extract from Professor Fairbairn.)

The imperfection of this arrangement, and the necessity for a "new" one, arose from "the vast disproportion between the two souls: the one soul being that of a rational and unaccountable creature, free to think, and act, and choose for itself; the other, that of an irrational creature, destitute of independent thought and moral feeling, and so incapable alike of sin or of holiness. The life-blood, then, which God gave for this purpose upon the altar, must obviously have been but a temporary expedient," &c. (Extract from Professor Fairbairn).

"It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," (Heb. x. 4). The blood of all the thousands upon thousands of animals that had been offered since the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai, had never effected "the redemption of the transgressions that were under the *first* covenant," no, not so much as one of them! How beautifully then does the Apostle say of Jesus, our sin-bearer, and sin-purger, that "for this cause *he* is the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of '*his* death,' we may have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. i. 14), both under the old covenant and under the new. For *his* blood "*cleanseth from all sin*"—past, present, and future, both to Jew and Gentile. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," (John i. 29; 1 John i. 7). The faith of the patriarchs, which from the beginning hung suspended on "Him that was to come," now received its reward. Jesus, as "the Mediator of the new covenant," lays down his life *for* his sheep, and we are reckoned to have died *in him*. We, the party covenanting with God, *die in Jesus*: and God accepts this death of the substitute, so that it is in his sight *as if* there had been "the death of the covenanter."

As to the ratifying of the new covenant, full well we know that while Moses "took the blood of calves and of goats," and said, "THIS is the blood of the covenant which God had enjoined unto you," Jesus at the last

supper took the cup, and when he had given to them all to drink of it, he said, "*This* is my blood of the new covenant [diathēkē], which is shed for many," (Mark xiv. 23, 24). "*My* blood." Oh what thrilling words! with what intensity of meaning did he utter them! And with what power should they come home to us when at his table he as it were says to us, Behold the vast and inconceivable privileges of the new covenant secured to you for ever, and ratified by "*my* blood." What increase of faith we need to receive the wondrous truth in all its divine simplicity!

'Tis mine! the covenant of his grace,
And every promise mine!
All sprung from everlasting love,
And sealed by blood divine. (DODDRIDGE.)

THE REMISSION OF SIN REQUIRING THE SHEDDING OF
BLOOD.

VER. 21, 22. "MOREOVER, HE SPRINKLED LIKEWISE WITH BLOOD BOTH THE TABERNACLE, AND ALL THE VESSELS OF THE MINISTRY. AND ALMOST ALL THINGS ARE BY THE LAW PURGED WITH BLOOD; AND WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD IS NO REMISSION."

The very tabernacle itself was rendered unclean by the sins of Israel, as we read, "He shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, *that remaineth among them*

in the midst of *their* uncleanness," (See Lev. xvi. 14, 16, 18, 33). How fearfully defiling is sin, but how much more fearful it is to feel that there is no being purified from it, save by "blood;" and that "blood" in every instance involves the forfeiture of *life*. When Aaron went in to hallow the holy place, he had to "*kill* the goat of the sin-offering," and afterwards "to bring his *blood* within the veil." There could be no *hallowing* without *blood-shedding*, and where blood was shed, life was taken. It is a thought which should fill our minds with reverent solemnity in reading such a chapter as this, where twelve times over between verses 7 and 25 we find mention made of the *blood*.

Two things especially are attributed to it—first, purging, then pardon, (ver. 22). Even under the law "almost all things" were "*purged* with blood." "How much *more* shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (ver. 13, 14). Believer, with such a remedy ever before thee, how is it that thy conscience is so often burdened with a felt sense of guilt? Go to the purifying blood of Jesus, and your service will be changed at once from "dead" to "living," and your conscience will be clear, and you will go on your way rejoicing. It is only by degrees we learn out the preciousness of the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son *cleanseth* us from all sin;" that it is not merely a past cleansing, but a present one, going on every moment, (1 John i. 7).

It is through this bloodshedding alone that we can ever join the saints in glory, for *they* "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. *Therefore* are they before the throne of God," (Rev. vii. 14, 15). Oh to bathe oftener in the "fountain open for sin and for uncleanness," in *our* laver, even Jesus, who of God is made unto us "sanctification!" (Zech. xiii. 1; 1 Cor. i. 30).

While it is by blood that we are cleansed, it is by blood also that we are forgiven. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "The wages of sin is death," (Ezek. xviii. 4; Rom. vi. 23). Nay, it was God's own threatening to Adam, that if he ate of the tree of which he commanded him not to eat, he should "*surely die*," (Gen. ii. 17). The forfeiture of life is the *invariable* penalty of sin, yea, of but one single transgression of the law! "for whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," (James ii. 10). The blood shed on the day of atonement, seems above all others to afford a striking illustration of these words. Without that solemn day, the whole congregation of Israel would have been reckoned unclean in the sight of their holy God. But when the atonement had been made by the high priest in secret, within the sanctuary, with the goat which he had killed, and he then took the live goat in the presence of all the people, and laid his hands upon him, confessing over him all the iniquities

of the children of Israel—and at length sent him away into “a land not inhabited,” then indeed there was a full exhibition of the “*remission*” of sin. It was *dismissed—sent away* (so the Greek word signifies). The blood had been sprinkled before the mercy-seat, and on the mercy-seat, and upon the altar, &c., and full atonement had been made, and now the sins of the people are regarded as thrown into the completest oblivion.

“What a striking image of the everlasting oblivion into which the sins of God’s people are thrown, when once they are covered with the blood of an acceptable atonement! . . . But does faith stagger while it contemplates so free an absolution? Or, having once apprehended, is it apt to lose the clearness of its view and the firmness of its grasp, from having to do with things which lie so much within the territory of the unseen and eternal? Let it throw itself back upon the plain and palpable transactions of the type. And with what satisfaction Israel of old beheld the high priest, when the work of reconciliation was accomplished, send their iniquities away into a land of forgetfulness, and with what joy they then rejoiced, let us rest assured that we are now warranted to cherish the same, not doubting that, in the outward literalities of the shadow, the Lord has portrayed distinctly before us the inward and hidden realities of the substance.” (Extracts from Fairbairn’s “Typology of Scripture.”)

Is it not thus we learn something of what the blood of Christ can do, and has done for us? and of our utterly lost estate, because he gave *himself for us?* for “without shedding of blood is NO remission.” But for the yielding up of his life in the stead of ours, *our lives had all been forfeited*, and we had gone down quick into hell.

THE PERFECTION OF THE “SACRIFICES” REQUIRED FOR
“THE HEAVENLY THINGS.”

VER. 23-28. “IT WAS THEREFORE NECESSARY THAT THE PATTERNS OF THINGS IN THE HEAVENS SHOULD BE PURIFIED WITH THESE; BUT THE HEAVENLY THINGS THEMSELVES WITH BETTER SACRIFICES THAN THESE. FOR CHRIST IS NOT ENTERED INTO THE HOLY PLACES MADE WITH HANDS, WHICH ARE THE FIGURES OF THE TRUE; BUT INTO HEAVEN ITSELF, NOW TO APPEAR IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR US: NOR YET THAT HE SHOULD OFFER HIMSELF OFTEN, AS THE HIGH PRIEST ENTERETH INTO THE HOLY PLACE EVERY YEAR WITH BLOOD OF OTHERS; FOR THEN MUST HE OFTEN HAVE SUFFERED SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD: BUT NOW ONCE, IN THE END OF THE WORLD, HATH HE APPEARED, TO PUT AWAY SIN BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF. AND AS IT IS APPOINTED UNTO MEN ONCE TO DIE, BUT AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT; SO CHRIST WAS ONCE OFFERED TO BEAR THE SINS OF MANY: AND UNTO THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM SHALL HE APPEAR THE SECOND TIME, WITHOUT SIN, UNTO SALVATION.”

It is but a glance we get of the earthly tabernacle here, just to contrast it with the heavenly. What man's hands had fashioned after a pattern shewed to him by God in the mount, could only be “of the earth,

earthly;" and it sufficed that it should be purified with the blood of animals which were earthly. For it was altogether but a grand figurative and visible display of the true, spiritual, and heavenly reality in the unseen world above.

But into that world, into that true and heavenly tabernacle, "which the Lord pitched, and not man," Christ is now entered. He is gone into the very "*presence of God*," with no veil, no curtains between. Face to face he appears before God continually, and that too "*for us!*" Oh to realise the wonderful preciousness of this truth moment by moment!

There is something beautifully touching in the expression, "Now to *appear* in the presence of God for us." It is as if it were enough that he should *shew himself* to God for us,—enough that *he* should be *there*. And is it not so? Has it not "pleased the Father" that all fulness should so dwell in him, that if a soul cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner," God has but to *look* at Jesus, and there is One before him sitting on "*the mercy-seat*," that he may abundantly bestow mercy? Or if a saint walking in the light detect some stain upon his garment, and cry for cleansing, again God has but to *look* upon Jesus, and say, "The blood of Jesus Christ" my "Son cleanseth from *all* sin." The sight of Jesus quite satisfies the Father. How inconceivably precious then is the thought that it is "*for us*" he is there presenting *us* to God, not having

to leave that place for a frequent repetition of his sacrifice, for most emphatically it is said, "*Now* to appear in the presence of God for us ;" not once a year, not occasionally, but always: it is an ever present "*now*." That *he* should "*often* have suffered since the foundation of the world," (ver. 25, 26), is a thought, from the bare idea of which, the mind of any one who has known in almost any degree what it is to have "fellowship" with him in his sufferings, must recoil with instant horror. What he *did* endure while he was "once" on our earth, was all God's holy character demanded, and accomplished that which all the blood that had been shed from the beginning had failed to effect; it "*put away sin!*" "Now once in the end of the world (orig. *αἰώνων*) hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Thus "the heavenly things" *are purified*, and oh *how* pure they are!—not a scent of sin remains. If the tabernacle of old were hallowed from all its uncleanness on the day of atonement (Lev. xvi.), much more is heaven; for that might be defiled again, but this, never. It is purified with "*better* sacrifices." "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of *himself!*" "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin," (1 John iii. 5). No words can describe the perfection of the offering of Jesus; but our souls may find rest as they contemplate what it has accomplished for them, and in what more than

in this, that "he appeared to *put away sin*?" Blessed, blessed object! worthy, may we not say, of all he suffered! For sin had dishonoured God and his creation, and had brought ruin and death on man; but Jesus would blot out every stain, would abolish, annul, destroy, and put it all away. "Behold the Lamb which taketh away the sin of the world," (John i. 29). Not particular *sins* merely, but "sin" itself. *Sin as it relates to God.* Oh what a thought is this—"sin" really "*put away!*" Suffering believer, to whom every hour of sin is prolonged agony, look again and again at these words, and strengthen thyself in the assured confidence that what the sacrifice of Jesus has already accomplished in part, it shall yet bring to perfection, and "sin" be put away for ever. Oh what rest such a prospect should infuse into our souls!

The two last verses of this chapter are most remarkable—first, in the comparison made between man's dying but once, and Christ's dying but once; then in the contrast between *what follows* upon man's death in general, and what follows upon Christ's death as our substitute (ver. 27, 28): "As it is appointed unto men *once* to die"—men die, but only "once." There is "a time to be born, and a time to die," (Eccles. iii. 2). "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power *in the day of death*: and there is no discharge in that war," (Eccles. viii. 8). He is "once to die."

But is there to be an end of him at death? Oh no! —there is something “*after!*” “After this”—(oh the terrific meaning of that “after”). “After this *the judgment.*” “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which *after* he hath killed hath power to cast into hell,” (Luke xii. 4, 5).

“After this the judgment”—the time of passing sentence—the time of reckoning—the time of condemning. “He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness,” (Acts xvii. 31). God “the *righteous Judge*” will judge every man’s life, and give him *according to* what he has done in the body (2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xxii. 12; Luke xvi. 22–26); discerning between the different shares of guilt each man has had in any matter; and not alone in each act or word, but in that act as it has travelled onwards like an ever-widening stream, through all the months or years that follow to the very end of time. He traces it through all its windings, sees the influence a father’s word, or a mother’s look has on a *child*, and how that seed sown springs up, bears fruit, ripens *and sows itself again!* So that “we are poison-trees, from whose branches there hang myriads of seeds,—seeds which every moment are dropping from us and springing up around.” (Extract from “Words of Welcome,” by Rev. H. Bonar, D.D.) We soon lose sight

of the effect of our actions, but God, never. "Thou layest, or treasurest up all my ways or actions," *i. e.*, to be one day brought into judgment: so Parkhurst renders the latter part of Ps. cxxxix. 2, the word we translate "acquainted," being literally "to lay up as in a storehouse!" The Psalms are full of warnings of this coming "judgment," most terrible to the ungodly, for "the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous," (Ps. i. 5).

As then men die but once, so Christ was offered but "once," (ver. 28). "In that he died, he died unto sin once." But "death hath no more dominion over him," (Rom. vi. 10). His one offering was perfect in itself—perfect for ever, but he did not die as other men die; he died "*for us*." This accounts for the striking change of expression in the 28th verse from that in the 26th, relative to sin. There, it was viewed in its relation to God, as it is *in itself*, and as the Lord Jesus has in very deed put it away; but *here* it is strictly in connexion with believers, speaking of their particular "*sins*," which he bare "in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24); and limiting the number to those who through grace accept him as their sin-bearer. For alas! the majority of men reject him still, he has borne "the sins of *many*;" it is "*many* sons" he purposes to bring to glory (Chap. ii. 10; Isa. liii. 12): and for these "*many*," he will do great things indeed

at his appearing. For his death was not in vain. It was not in vain that he "was once offered to bear the sins of many." What *follows* upon Christ's death for us, stands out in most striking and fearful contrast with that which follows on the death of the men whose sins he did not bear. For *them* it is—"after this the judgment," but for *us* it is Christ appearing in our stead for our full salvation. Men will come each *with* their own lifetime of sin upon them, while but *one* transgression of the law would have condemned them to eternal death; but Christ will come "*without sin*," to appear for our entire acquittal. Oh, how we shall feel the perfection of his offering then! Ours will be full, complete, final "salvation" then, in body as well as soul. For "*we look for the Saviour*, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," (Phil. iii. 20, 21). "To them that *look for him* shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." The word "look" is worthy of notice. It implies a stretching forth of the neck with eager desire to see the person expected. Are we looking thus for Jesus? Are we crying, "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices?" (Sol. Song viii. 14). This surely should be the response of grateful love when we contemplate what Jesus has done for us, and what he will do when he comes again.

HEB. X.

THE "SHADOW"—IN THE LAW.

VER. 1-4. "FOR THE LAW HAVING A SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME, AND NOT THE VERY IMAGE OF THE THINGS, CAN NEVER WITH THOSE SACRIFICES, WHICH THEY OFFERED YEAR BY YEAR CONTINUALLY, MAKE THE COMERS THEREUNTO PERFECT: FOR THEN WOULD THEY NOT HAVE CEASED TO BE OFFERED? BECAUSE THAT THE WORSHIPPERS ONCE PURGED SHOULD HAVE HAD NO MORE CONSCIENCE OF SINS. BUT IN THOSE SACRIFICES THERE IS A REMEMBRANCE AGAIN MADE OF SINS EVERY YEAR. FOR IT IS NOT POSSIBLE THAT THE BLOOD OF BULLS AND OF GOATS SHOULD TAKE AWAY SINS."

ONCE again we are sent back to the imperfection of the Jewish law; but it is to present Jesus in a new, more personal, and more precious point of view than any that has gone before, setting forth the perfection of his offering in its last and highest aspect, viz., as that of "his own body." For although the law was in itself indeed but "a *shadow* of good things to come," it was the shadow of a *reality*. The "good things" were yet "*to come*." When they did come, they proved the emptiness and shadowy character of what had gone before. Even that most solemn day of all their days, the great day of atonements, never made

one worshipper *perfect* ! Their very repetition of the sacrifices year by year, proved that year by year they felt they were *imperfect*, and needed to be cleansed afresh. This imperfection is still an uppermost thought of the Apostle's mind, and he leaves no opportunity unused of impressing it upon the Hebrews. And his argument is irresistible ; had the worshippers been perfected, the sacrifices "would have ceased to be offered" (ver. 2, margin) : for being once purged the worshippers would have had "no more conscience of sins." This is unanswerable. "They that be whole need not a physician," (Matt. ix. 12). They that be clean feel not their need of cleansing. But under the law this was for ever unattainable.

It speaks powerfully, however, to Christians, negatively, in shewing them how infinitely they fall short of realising the perfection now made theirs in Christ. They too often go about groaning under the burden of their sins, as if they were no better off than the Israelites, who really *needed* fresh sacrifices for their cleansing. Why are *we* groaning under "the conscience of sin?" Why are we not rejoicing in the one sacrifice which *has* purified the worshippers? Ah, believer, you "*should* have" "no more conscience of sins;" as Owen says, "They should have no conscience agitating, tossing, disquieting, perplexing for sins." We should have peace. Oh, let us look at the perfection of Christ's offering, till we have it instilled

through and through our hearts. The imperfection of the sacrifices offered under the law involved their repetition, and their repetition involved the constant *bringing of sin to remembrance*. Ver. 3, 4, "In those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. *For* it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

The calling of sin to remembrance is viewed as an indication that it is not taken away: nay, more, the reason is plainly given that it is remembered, *because* of the inability of the blood of animals to take it away. May we not infer from this that since the perfect sacrifice of Jesus *has* put it away, it is to be called to remembrance no more? This is an important question, and worthy of serious consideration, for it bears closely on the subject of self-examination. Do not many set apart the last day of the year, or their birthdays, or some particular season, for the very purpose of recalling the sins that are past? And do not the majority of Christians seek at night to recall the sins of the day? They mean well; but is there not in it a tendency to perpetuate, under the gospel, the imperfection of the Jewish law? Does it not tend to bondage? Should not sin be confessed, and pardon obtained at the time it is committed?

“THE BODY IS OF CHRIST.”

VER. 5-7. “WHEREFORE, WHEN HE COMETH INTO THE WORLD, HE SAITH, SACRIFICE AND OFFERING THOU Wouldest NOT, BUT A BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME: IN BURNT-OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN THOU HAST HAD NO PLEASURE: THEN SAID I, LO, I COME (IN THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO THY WILL, O GOD.”

What a conclusion to the subject we have here! It is as if He, of whom the Apostle had delighted to say so much, now suddenly *presented himself*, to *speak* for himself; as if he had stepped forward (as in the last great day of the feast), and cried, saying, “Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, *but a body hast thou prepared me*: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure: then said I, *Lo, I come*,” &c.

It is the living person, presenting himself to declare with his own mouth that all that has been said of him is true, that the sacrifices of the law had never yielded God satisfaction, but that he himself was come into the world to be the Lamb of God that should take away the sins of the world. “Lo, I come,”—“I, even I.”

It is the great high priest himself coming forward to testify that *the bodies of beasts* (chap. xiii. 11), had never put sin away; and that God had given to *him* “a body” in which he would suffer and “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,” and that he had done it!

There is something fitted to arrest the mind in a passage like this, and to make it long to pause and gaze upon that living Person, and to linger over the words he has spoken. For they are his *own* words, the utterance of his own heart before God; and it is very interesting to observe that the word used by him in verse 6, "In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had *no pleasure*," is the very same that occurs in Matt. xvii. 5, in a precisely opposite sense as regards himself: "This is my beloved Son, in whom *I am well pleased!*" How strikingly beautiful the contrast!

"Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not:"—"For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings," (Hos. vi. 6). "And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams," (1 Sam. xv. 22). "For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offerings." (Ps. li. 16.) (See also Isa. i. 11-18, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord," &c.; and Amos v. 21, 22).

Oh, how sweet, how fragrant to God, who had *so long* been provoked to anger by the unholy offerings of his people Israel, must have been the perfect offering of Jesus, *doing all his will!* "Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God!" We are little able to appreciate the

exceeding preciousness of this to God; but it should be our constant delight to study "in the volume of the book," all that is "written" there, in Moses, in the Psalms, and in the prophets concerning him. We might gather *much*.

NOTE.—In the 40th Psalm, from which this quotation is made, the words which the Apostle has rendered, "A body hast thou prepared me," are in the Hebrew, "Mine ears hast thou opened." This difference of rendering has, of course, occasioned considerable discussion, and few are agreed about it. The expression of opening the ears is not uncommon in the Old Testament, and the context seems everywhere to sanction the idea that obedience and teachableness are the prominent thoughts connected with it. Thus in Job xxxvi. 10 and xxxiii. 16, the ears are spoken of as uncovered, in contrast to stopping them. In Isa. l. 4, it is, "He wakeneth mine ears to hear as the learned," (*or*, "as the disciples.") In Isa. l. 5, we read of opening or loosing the ears.

The word in Ps. xl. 6 is altogether different from that in Exod. xxi. 6.

CHRIST AND THE TWO COVENANTS.

VER. 8-10. "ABOVE, WHEN HE SAID, SACRIFICE, AND OFFERING, AND BURNT-OFFERINGS, AND OFFERING FOR SIN, THOU Wouldest NOT, NEITHER HADST PLEASURE THEREIN; WHICH ARE OFFERED BY THE LAW; THEN SAID HE, LO, I COME TO DO THY WILL, O GOD. HE TAKETH AWAY THE FIRST, THAT HE MAY ESTABLISH THE SECOND. BY THE WHICH WILL WE ARE SANCTIFIED, THROUGH THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST ONCE FOR ALL."

There is the summing up of *all* the sacrifices offered for the expiation of sin under the law, the very essence of the first covenant, and what its services principally

consisted in. "Sacrifice and offering," "burnt-offering and sin-offering," (Ps. xl. 6). "Which are offered *by the law.*"

Yet see it all swept away; these "*thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein!*" And mark the exquisite simplicity of Christ's coming in their stead: "Then said he, *Lo, I come* to do thy will, O God." And what follows? "He taketh away the first," (*i.e.* covenant), "that he may establish the second." That which was "offered by the law," giving God no pleasure, is swept away. "He taketh away the first" (literally, "he killeth" it), and the second he establishes, by himself fulfilling it. Could there be a more powerful or striking conclusion to the Apostle's arguments regarding the covenants? Surely it were impossible. It is Christ himself who "taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

Then it is added, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." This is very important to us for two reasons. First, because it points out distinctly to what particular part of the "will" of God reference has been specially made by the Lord Jesus, even his atoning work. And secondly, because it tells us that in this fulfilment of his Father's "will"—in this perfect keeping of the new covenant, and ratifying it with his own blood, he has done that for us, which the law with all its sacrifices offered year by year continually never did

for its worshippers ;—for “ we *are* sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” We *are* set apart for God as his holy and peculiar people ; we *are* perfected in Jesus. “ *We are sanctified.*” The ordinary view of sanctification makes it *only* a progressive work, and limits it to the operation of the Holy Ghost. But true as this view is, it is not the only one to be taken of sanctification, as this verse amongst many others plainly proves, for it speaks of a sanctification perfectly wrought out for us “ through the offering of the body of Jesus.” In 1 Cor. i. 30 also, we read of Christ being made *unto us* sanctification, as well as righteousness. And again in 1 Cor. vi. 11, “ Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified *in the name* of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” There is something unspeakably comforting in this truth : not only does it shew us, on the one hand, how exceedingly “ complete ” we are in Jesus, but it enables us, on the other, to look away from ourselves *even* in the matter of sanctification. It is all Jesus ; he *is* everything, and he *does* everything from first to last in the covenant of grace—that everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. And the peculiar preciousness of this chapter lies in this, that these things are not spoken *of* him merely : he is, as it were, present, to speak for himself : “ Lo, I come.” This is the special work I am come to do ; I am come to take away the first covenant and establish the second, (ver. 9).

CHRIST'S FINISHED WORK CONTRASTED WITH THAT OF
THE AARONIC PRIESTS.

VER. 11-14. "AND EVERY PRIEST STANDETH DAILY MINISTERING, AND OFFERING OFTENTIMES THE SAME SACRIFICES, WHICH CAN NEVER TAKE AWAY SINS: BUT THIS MAN, AFTER HE HAD OFFERED ONE SACRIFICE FOR SINS, FOR EVER SAT DOWN ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD; FROM HENCEFORTH EXPECTING TILL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE HIS FOOTSTOOL. FOR BY ONE OFFERING HE HATH PERFECTED FOR EVER THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED."

They *stand* to minister; their ministrations are daily *repetitions*; and at last they never avail to "*take away sins*." How striking the contrast in the case of the Lord Jesus! *He* "sat down on the right hand of God." He "offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever." (This punctuation is now preferred by almost all commentators). "*He* hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" by his one offering. Oh, the beautiful perfection that pervades the work of our great High Priest! It has not only left no precept of the law undone, but it has *perfected us*! It has left no flaw in *our* perfection. "This is not absolute, internal perfection of grace; the word 'made perfect' is never so used: it is the perfecting of drawing nigh to God: for this is the grand idea, the fundamental point in the whole Jewish ritual, as the type of what Jesus should do, viz., 'bring us unto God,' " (Owen).

All that sin has done in separating us from God

(Isa. lix. 12), Jesus has *undone* for us (if one may be allowed the expression), *in putting it away*. Oh, to realise more and more each day how perfectly it is put away! "For by one offering *he hath perfected* for ever them that are sanctified," is the idea still lingering in the Apostle's mind; the priests of Aaron's line could bring nothing to perfection, but Jesus, the priest after the order of Melchisedec, perfected all. And it is quite clear, that though he makes no mention of him, he has Melchisedec prominently in view here. He sees the Aaronic priests *standing*; he sees Jesus sitting down on the right of God, just as in Ps. cx. 1, the invitation is given to him by Jehovah, "Sit thou at my right hand," while it is added, "*until* I make thine enemies thy footstool." The Apostle, then, was contemplating Jesus in his Melchisedec character, sitting as a priest upon his throne, yet put into the attitude of patient expectation by the "*until*" of Jehovah. "*From henceforth expecting*," (ver. 13). It is deeply interesting thus to be put in possession of Christ's present occupation, and to be let to know (so to speak) anything of the thoughts of his heart. He is not only interceding, he is "*expecting*;" for there are others in the world beside his own people, and these his enemies are to be made his footstool in the day when his Melchisedec character is fully developed. For this he waits. The word "*expecting*" is the same that occurs in James v. 7, "Behold, the husbandman *waiteth* for the precious

fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain." So Jesus waits, "from henceforth *expecting*." And what an example to us: for did he suffer his faith to be shaken by outward appearances, as ours often is, what darkness might oftentimes cloud his *unclouded* spirit! But no; he rests, and rests confidently on the promises of his God and our God; and for eighteen hundred years he has been "*expecting*," and *still* goes on "*expecting*," till his enemies be made his footstool."

THE WITNESS BORNE BY THE HOLY GHOST.

VER. 15-18. "WHEREOF THE HOLY GHOST ALSO IS A WITNESS UNTO US: FOR AFTER THAT HE HAD SAID BEFORE, THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAITH THE LORD; I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR HEARTS, AND IN THEIR MINDS WILL I WRITE THEM; THEN HE SAID" (see margin), "AND THEIR SINS AND INIQUITIES WILL I REMEMBER NO MORE. NOW, WHERE REMISSION OF THESE IS, THERE IS NO MORE OFFERING FOR SIN."

That the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, had for ever perfected his sanctified ones, had other testimony still, than that borne by the Apostle and by our Lord himself. For after that the Holy Ghost had secured for us in the new and better covenant, that God's laws should be written on our hearts, that we should be his holy, sanctified people, he goes on to say further in regard to sin, "Their sins and

their iniquities will I remember no more." They are so completely atoned for, that they are in the sight of God as though they had never been. Would it have been possible for God to have chosen words to express more pointedly and more vividly the utter putting out of remembrance the sins of his people, than in such terms of love as these?

"I have *blotted out*, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins," (Isa. xlv. 22). Who could attempt to gather together again the particles of a cloud that had been all dispersed?

"Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," (Mic. vii. 18, 19). Who would think of looking for a lost thing in "the depths of the sea?" How perfectly it conveys the idea of something profoundly hidden out of sight!

"Blessed is he . . . whose sin is *covered*," (Ps. xxxii. 1). When God has put a covering, shall man dare to lift it off? Yet he has "*covered*" the sins of all his pardoned ones.

"Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back," (Isa. xxxviii. 17). And, therefore, they are no more—"in the light of thy countenance," (Ps. xc. 8). Thou lookest on them no more.

"As far as the east is from the west, *so far* hath he removed our transgressions from us," (Ps. ciii. 12). He has literally put them, may we not say, *out of our reach*?

Yea, we may search for them, but "they shall not be found," for such are the very terms of the new covenant made with Israel and Judah (see Jer. l. 20), into which we enter with them as grafted into their olive-tree. They may be "sought for," but "*there shall be none !*"

God remembers them no more. For they are sent away as on the day of atonement—remitted, once and for ever. Such is the witness of God the Holy Ghost on this to us most thrilling and important theme.

It may possibly be that there is in this chapter even a *threefold* testimony borne to the perfection of the one offering of Jesus. In ver. 5-7 by the Lord Jesus himself. In ver. 12, 13, by Jehovah, as quoted from Ps. cx. 1, and lastly by the Holy Ghost, in ver. 15-18. Certainly it is a pleasure to God to see sin finally put away; for it is the abominable thing which He hates. And we never find Him recalling or dwelling on it, in the case of his people. Jesus too is *glad* that it is put away. How beautifully he says to his bride, "The winter is past, the rain is *over and gone*," as if he loved the "morning without clouds," (Sol. Song ii. 10, 11; 2 Sam. xxiii. 4). And what can "the Spirit of *holiness*" feel but holy joy, when each iniquity in each heart is subdued, and the image of Jesus more strongly moulded on the soul? The Lord teach every believer more of the wonderful preciousness of that great covenant truth, "And their sins and their iniquities will I

remember no more;" for the result that flows immediately from it, is of an importance that cannot be sufficiently told. "Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." The work is completely done.

"The sacrifice of Christ because it has taken away sin, admits not of repetition. The Apostle reasons on this as a truth acknowledged by all. Sacrifices which are repeated, he says, bring sin to remembrance; a sacrifice which has put it away requires no repetition. What shall we say then to the Romish mass? We are told that it is the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, and yet those who say so, *repeat it continually*. Only one thing can be said, viz., that it is an open testimony to the inefficacy of Christ's sacrifice. If there be any truth in this apostolic argument, that apostasy in her masses has been for ages proclaiming openly that the blood of Christ is as valueless as the blood of a bull, and that the body which was prepared by the Holy Ghost is as worthless as the body of a goat. From the inspired words before us I bring, in the name of God, this charge against her, and defy her whole priesthood to repel it. . . . Let me affectionately caution you to avoid all approaches to that apostasy. In this dangerous day such a caution is more than ever needful, for the approaches to it are gradual—we slide into her errors, before we are aware. Take heed of calling the Lord's table *an altar*, and the bread and wine which

are placed on it *a sacrifice*, and God's ministers *priests*. For if that table be indeed an altar, if that bread and wine be indeed a sacrifice, and if the officiating minister be indeed a priest, there is no escaping, let us remember, from the dreadful consequence—*sin is not taken away*. To say that a sacrifice which admits of repetition, has taken it away, is to deny the inspired reasoning before us. Moreover, if these things be true, *it never can be taken away*. For there is no other sacrifice for sin than that which is thus repeated; and a sacrifice which can be repeated is, according to the reasoning of the text, a valueless, profitless nothing." (Tait's "Meditationes Hebraicae," vol. ii.)

HEB. X. 19, &c.

WE have now arrived at the turning point, so to speak, of this whole Epistle. Hitherto the Apostle's object has been mainly to set forth the character, office, person, and work of our great high priest, Christ Jesus.

But now, having abundantly set before us all that Christ on *his* part has so completely, fully, and perfectly accomplished for us, he goes on to shew what remains for *us* to do on our parts.

BELIEVERS—CHRIST'S HOLY PRIESTHOOD.

VER. 19-22. "HAVING THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BOLDNESS TO ENTER INTO THE HOLIEST BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS, BY A NEW AND LIVING WAY, WHICH HE HATH CONSECRATED FOR US THROUGH THE VAIL, THAT IS TO SAY, HIS FLESH; AND HAVING AN HIGH PRIEST OVER THE HOUSE OF GOD; LET US DRAW NEAR WITH A TRUE HEART, IN FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH, HAVING OUR HEARTS SPRINKLED FROM AN EVIL CONSCIENCE, AND OUR BODIES WASHED WITH PURE WATER."

We are priests. And what a priesthood ours is! it takes us not only into the holy place, where the priests of old had access, but *into the Holiest of all!* There, where God himself shines forth in all his Shekinah brilliancy, "from above the mercy-seat;" there, where Jesus himself is ministering at his right hand;—*there*

it is that we have boldness to enter. Our faith is hindered by no veil from going into the very presence of God.

Whatever was typified by the Shekinah cloud which filled the most holy place (and we know how it is written, "*I* will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat,"—Lev. xvi. 2); *all that* is to be realised by faith in all our approaches unto God. We are to meet God. It is *worship*; and it is for every one of us, the spiritual Israel, to realise it every day and every hour.

They find access at every hour
To God within the veil;
Hence they desire a quickening power,
And joys that never fail. (WATTS.)

They enter with "boldness," with confidence, with freedom, to utter whatever is on their hearts. Not like Moses putting his shoes from off his feet, ere he could draw nigh to God, (Exod. iii. 4-6). Not like Jacob, when he exclaimed, "How *dreadful* is this place!" because the Lord was in it, (see Gen. xxviii. 16, 17). Nor like Manoah, saying to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God," (Jud. xiii. 22). Christ's "royal priesthood" has "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." We may be almost staggered at times by the thought of the very near approach to so holy a God as our God. But we need only to fall back upon the perfection of the offering of

Jesus for us. It is there God's eye rests, and there that ours should rest also.

How can it be that one so mean,
A sinner, selfish, dark, unclean,
Thus in the Holiest stands !
And in that light, divinely pure,
Which may no stain of sin endure,
Lifts up rejoicing hand !

Jesus ! the answer thou hast given !
Thy death, thy life, have open'd heaven
And all its joys to me ;
Wash'd in thy blood,—oh wondrous grace ;
I'm holy as the holy place,
In which I worship thee.

Yes, "it is the *blood* of Jesus" that has opened heaven to us, and never *till* that blood was shed could any saint enter the holiest with boldness as we now can. "His flesh," that is, *his body*, the body prepared for him, (ver. 5), and the body in which he bare our sins upon the tree (1 Pet. ii. 24), is that "new and living way" by which we draw near to God. "I am the way," (John xiv. 6). It is himself, "his own body."

Having then this "path of life" (Ps. xvi. 11) opened to us, and having an high priest over the house to regulate all within, "*let us draw near.*" Owen says, "This word is that whereby the whole performance of all divine and solemn worship was constantly expressed." And he adds, "Due preparation by fresh applications of our souls unto the efficacy of the blood of Christ for the purification of our hearts, that we

may be meet to draw nigh to God, is required of us. *The want of it is the bane of public worship.* Where it is not, there is no due reverence of God, no sanctification of his name, nor any benefit to be expected to our own souls."

Alas! in our ordinary public worship, how little there is of *this* drawing near! How few really come to the outward sanctuary to meet God! The Lord multiply his true worshippers, and send *into* the sanctuary the many who are now loiterers around it, that the outward temple may be filled with such as have their hearts and affections in heaven, drawing near God!

There are four ways especially alluded to by which we should "draw near."

1st, "With a true heart." For, "thou desirest truth in the inward parts," (Ps. li. 6). The knife of the priest lays bare "the inwards." But "if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God," (1 John iii. 21).

2d, "In full assurance of faith." These words have been almost a stumbling-block to some timid believers, who have regarded them as referring to their own salvation. But the Apostle is evidently looking higher, and is speaking of "full assurance of faith" in Jesus our high priest. And well would it be, if all sought more after this, and less after the former. Let us only be full of confidence in Jesus, and then, whether we know

it or not, there will be an assurance of our own safety in the soul. We shall be so absorbed in him, that we shall not think of ourselves. Oh to study him as our high priest over the house of God, until we have not one doubt about him left!

3d, "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience;" 4th, "And our bodies washed with pure water." In these two latter particulars, we seem to be carried back at once to the Levitical priesthood, on the day of their consecration. The blood of the ram of consecration was sprinkled on the priests, and their bodies were washed with water. (See Lev. viii. 6, 22-24). This at once explains and accounts for the use of this language by the Apostle; we must enter the holiest as consecrated, devoted priests, going into the presence of God by no other way than the altar and the laver.

INCREASING NEED TO HOLD FAST AS "THE DAY"

APPROACHES.

VER. 23-25. "LET US HOLD FAST THE PROFESSION OF OUR FAITH WITHOUT WAVERING; (FOR HE IS FAITHFUL THAT PROMISED;) AND LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER, TO PROVOKE UNTO LOVE, AND TO GOOD WORKS: NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER, AS THE MANNER OF SOME IS; BUT EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER: AND SO MUCH THE MORE, AS YE SEE THE DAY APPROACHING."

"Let us *hold fast* the profession of our faith;" seize it and retain it, for it is a hard struggle, as each

individual soldier of Jesus Christ knows well, (2 Tim. ii. 3; Eph. vi. 12). The more so, if it be carried on amidst much weakness, as in Gideon's case,—“faint, yet pursuing,” (Jud. viii. 5). We are exhorted, however, to hold fast without so much as “wavering;” for men, angels, and devils are spectators of our walk of faith. And each one of us is called on to “hold fast” for ourselves. Not without sufficient encouragement for so doing, however; for the Apostle, well aware of the difficulty of the duty, takes care to add, “For he is faithful that promised.” “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it,” (1 Thess. v. 24). The duty is attainable, for the faithful God is he who enables you to perform it.

The twenty-fourth verse leads us on a step further, shewing us something of our more social duties, what is due from one Christian to another in private life, &c. Owen says of the word “consider,” that it supposes that these persons “had a deep concern in one another;” and the word “provoke” is properly “to whet, sharpen, or incite,” even until the spirit be warned unto a duty. So that we ought, as fellow-Christians, to feel such concern for each other's welfare, as to be diligent in seeking to warm one another up “unto love and to good works,” which would greatly strengthen each individually in the matter of holding fast.

The twenty-fifth verse brings us to the third and

highest position contemplated by the Apostle in this passage, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," &c. This is evidently *public* worship, and most essential to the growth and building up of any soul into Christ. Preaching is indeed wont to be made very light of by many in our day; but it is pre-eminently that by which it has pleased God "to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21), and the instrumentality by which the Apostles ever sought to save souls. It seems as if there were danger of its being almost undervalued, in comparison with schools and the education of the young; but a soul that has been fed and nourished in "the assemblies of the saints," will not soon forsake them, feeling with the Psalmist, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord," (Ps. cxxii. 1). "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," &c. (Ps. lxxxiv.). And how earnestly David cried out when removed from the temple worship at Jerusalem of old, "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle," &c. (Ps. xliii. 3, also xlii. 4). What a happy assembling together was that in the house of Mary, on the night when Peter was set at liberty, and came, and found many "gathered together praying" (Acts xii. 12): and that other, when, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith,

"Peace be unto you," (John xx. 19). But it is not so much for enjoyment that the means of grace are provided, as for "the *strengthening* and refreshing of our souls." How often in the sanctuary does the Christian soldier feel his strength renewed, so that he girds on his armour afresh for the fight; and how *often* are the hearts of believers warmed there, so that they come away constrained to "provoke" one another "unto love and to good works!" Thus all these things tend to enable us to "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering:" they are means to an end, which St Paul knew to be essential to the standing fast of the converts in the faith. "And so much the more," he says, "as ye see the day approaching." The last times are pre-eminently characterised by "a falling away" from the true faith. (See 2 Thess. ii. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4; 1 Tim. iv. 1). The nearer therefore that we draw to such a period, the *more* need have we for using every means of being strengthened in our own true faith. Never were these exhortations of the Apostle so much called for as now. *The need only increases, as the day approaches.* Let the thought of that "day," that coming day, cheer and animate us in holding fast. It is "approaching." It is "approaching" quickly, as fast as the wings of time can fly: Do *you* "*see*" it approaching?

FINAL PERDITION.

VER. 26-31. "FOR IF WE SIN WILFULLY AFTER THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, THERE REMAINETH NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR SINS, BUT A CERTAIN FEARFUL LOOKING FOR OF JUDGMENT AND FIERY INDIGNATION, WHICH SHALL DEVOUR THE ADVERSARIES. HE THAT DESPISED MOSES' LAW DIED WITHOUT MERCY UNDER TWO OR THREE WITNESSES : OF HOW MUCH SORER PUNISHMENT, SUPPOSE YE, SHALL HE BE THOUGHT WORTHY, WHO HATH TRODDEN UNDER FOOT THE SON OF GOD, AND HATH COUNTED THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT, WHEREWITH HE WAS SANCTIFIED, AN UNHOLY THING, AND HATH DONE DESPITE UNTO THE SPIRIT OF GRACE? FOR WE KNOW HIM THAT HATH SAID, VENGEANCE BELONGETH UNTO ME, I WILL RECOMPENSE, SAITH THE LORD. AND AGAIN, THE LORD SHALL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE. IT IS A FEARFUL THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD."

Whilst this passage has arrested the attention of all, it has perplexed the minds of many true believers. And not without reason. For what can appear more evident, than that the Apostle here classes himself, and the whole body of Hebrew Christians to whom he wrote, amongst those who *might* fall finally away? "If *we* sin wilfully after that *we* have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but," &c. (ver. 26, 27). This is indeed startling language. For if this be so, what shall become of the doctrine of final perseverance? what becomes of assurance, and the comfortable and lively

hope which sustains the child of God, who knows that once *a child*, he is a child for ever?

That the Apostle intends to extend his warning beyond the mere worldly professor, and beyond the openly profane, seems to be one reason why he has thus included himself. We need such warnings, even though we be safe in Christ.

But Scripture cannot deny itself. If it teaches in one part that *nothing* "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 39)—if in another it says, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6), it will not contradict itself here. Nor does it. It is but a few verses further on that the Apostle writes again, "But *we* are *not* of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of the soul," (ver. 39). It is just as in chap. vi. 9, 10, he saw sufficient evidences of life and love to know that there *was* no falling away.

The point, however, which *he* seems to have in view is rather, that if the one sacrifice be rejected, *there is no other*. "There is *none other name* under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Neither is there salvation in any other," (Acts iv. 12). "Other foundation can no man lay," (1 Cor. iii. 11). The alternative is "fearful." Reject Jesus, and there remains

for you "but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries;" a something indescribably, inconceivably "fearful;" a fire "which shall eternally prey upon them," (2 Thess. i. 7-10). Oh, if Christless souls did but know what they are bringing on themselves! "After thy hardness and impenitent heart, *treasurest up unto thyself wrath* against the day of wrath," (Rom. ii. 5). Oh, from this hour begin to "lay up for thyself treasures in heaven."

The twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth verses put the case before us very strongly. Even under Moses' law, where "the blood of the covenant" was but the blood of bulls and goats, a man that "despised" it, died without mercy, "of how *much* sorer punishment," (asks the Apostle), "suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"—the blood of the *new* covenant, even the very blood of Jesus! Oh, what does he not *deserve*! And alas! when the day of judgment comes, it is as a day of recompenses—of retribution. "I will *recompense*, saith the Lord," (verse 30). "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be," (Rev. xxii. 12). Truly, truly, one cannot contemplate such *sore punishment* without feelings of horror, though we believe for

ourselves that Jesus has "delivered us from the wrath to come," (1 Thess. i. 10). But for others—oh, shall we not be quickened by such a passage as this to pray for lost and ruined souls till they be as brands plucked from the burning? A fearful—fearful thing it is, "to fall into the hands of the living God," (verse 31).

PAST EXPERIENCE RECALLED.

VER. 32-34. "BUT CALL TO REMEMBRANCE THE FORMER DAYS, IN WHICH, AFTER YE WERE ILLUMINATED, YE ENDURED A GREAT FIGHT OF AFFLICTIONS; PARTLY, WHILST YE WERE MADE A GAZINGSTOCK BOTH BY REPROACHES AND AFFLICTIONS; AND PARTLY, WHILST YE BECAME COMPANIONS OF THEM THAT WERE SO USED. FOR YE HAD COMPASSION OF ME IN MY BONDS, AND TOOK JOYFULLY THE SPOILING OF YOUR GOODS, KNOWING IN YOURSELVES THAT YE HAVE IN HEAVEN A BETTER AND AN ENDURING SUBSTANCE."

It is not uncommon with the saints to recall the things God has wrought by them in the past, in order to gain strength for the future. David did so: "Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth," (Ps. lxxi. 20). "Thou *hast* been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation," (Ps. xxvii. 9). "Thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?" (Ps. lvi. 13). And Samuel set up a stone to remind him of past experience, "calling the

name of it Ebenezer, saying, *Hitherto* hath the Lord helped us," (1 Sam. vii. 12).

The Apostle recommends these tried Hebrew Christians to follow the same course, that they might be strengthened to "hold fast" the profession of their faith without wavering. They seem to have been called (in the earlier days of their translation out of darkness into God's marvellous light) to go through very fearful tribulation; such indeed as they could liken only unto "a great fight of afflictions." Owen says that the allusion is taken from wrestling for a prize; and adds, "*That* labour and contention of spirit, which they had in their profession with sin and suffering, is here expressed, which set forth the greatest, most earnest and vehement actings and endeavours of spirit, that our nature can arise unto."

Nor were their afflictions confined to those which are spiritual; they were held up to public scorn and reproach, and even lost their goods and possessions. But it mattered not; knowing what they had "in heaven," they could afford to lose what they had on earth. "Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." This, however, is rather the experience of the present, than of the past—for the word is "*knowing*." (Doubtless it was from these *present* evidences that the Apostle ventured to state so strongly in ver. 39, "We are not of them that draw back," &c. It is precisely the repetition of

chap. vi. 10, "*Do minister.*") It is not simply that they knew and felt what they had in heaven, in those "former days," but they knew and felt it still. And this knowledge formed the very groundwork and foundation of all the precious fruits which had flowed forth from them in such copious streams of sympathy, faith, endurance, and courage.

THE "RECOMPENSE OF REWARD" IN PROSPECT.

VER. 35-37. "CAST NOT AWAY THEREFORE YOUR CONFIDENCE, WHICH HATH GREAT RECOMPENSE OF REWARD. FOR YE HAVE NEED OF PATIENCE, THAT, AFTER YE HAVE DONE THE WILL OF GOD, YE MIGHT RECEIVE THE PROMISE. FOR YET A LITTLE WHILE, AND HE THAT SHALL COME WILL COME, AND WILL NOT TARRY."

You know what you have in heaven, the Apostle would say, even a "great recompense of reward." It is something great, in the sense of glorious and magnificent; no mean thing, but what it is worthy *of God* to give. For God would never have us lose our comfort here, had he not abundant recompense and compensation to offer us hereafter. Indeed, he himself has told us there is no comparing them; "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory," (Rom. viii. 18). On no account, then, lose your courage, or cast away your confidence. Jesus sustained himself amidst his most tremendous sufferings, by the prospect of the glory beyond: see

Ps. xxii. and cii.; and Luke xxii., where his thoughts were so constantly returning again and again to *the kingdom*; for his kingdom was not of this world. We have the very same prospects to sustain us that he had to sustain him—for *he* endured “for the joy that was set before him.” In the meantime, then, “let patience have her perfect work,” and if our “need” of it be great, let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may “find grace to help *in time of need*.” God has proved his sense of the difficulty of our enduring long, when he has spoken of strengthening us “with *all* might, according to his glorious power, *unto all patience* and long-suffering with joyfulness,” (Col. i. 11). Why *such* strength, except the need for it is very great? And who that has known protracted months or years of sorrow and of suffering, but has keenly felt their “need of patience.” Let us, then, hold fast our confidence, with the “great recompense of reward” attached to it, assured that but “a *little* while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry”—Himself the “Recompense!” Yes, it is ever upon the person and appearing of the Lord Jesus, that the Apostle fixes the minds of believers for the consummation of all their hopes. “*He* that shall come will come.” And is it not their continual response—

“Even so, Lord Jesus, come.”

“Make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying,” (Ps. lxx. 5).

For--how will recompense his smile,
The sufferings of this little while.

NOTE.—It is interesting to observe that in Hab. ii. 3, the passage to which the Apostle makes evident allusion in ver. 37, there are two Hebrew words for our one English word “tarry.” So that the text might be rendered, “Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, and will not be postponed, or *put off* beyond the time appointed.”—(PARKHURST).

SAVING FAITH.

VER. 38, 39. “NOW, THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH: BUT IF ANY MAN DRAW BACK, MY SOUL SHALL HAVE NO PLEASURE IN HIM. BUT WE ARE NOT OF THEM WHO DRAW BACK UNTO PERDITION; BUT OF THEM THAT BELIEVE TO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL.”

The Apostle continues his allusion to the Prophet Habakkuk, not quoting his exact words, but giving the general meaning, “The just shall *live* by faith.” It is not the single act of faith, which is all that some persons imagine to be necessary, that turns out to be saving faith. There must be a *life* of faith; a carrying of it out throughout a man’s daily walk, a real *living life by faith*, (Gal. ii. 20). When the Apostle spoke of preaching the gospel to Jew and Greek, he valued it on this very account, that “therein is the righteousness of God revealed *from faith to faith*: as it is written, The just shall live by faith,” (Rom. i. 17).

To “draw back,” then, is necessarily to lose it all. In Hab. ii. 4, the words are, “His soul which is *lifted*

up is not upright in him ;” *i.e.*, it is proud, arrogant, presumptuous, &c., and doubtless the Apostle intended by drawing back, what he had elsewhere called sinning “ wilfully,” which ends in perdition and everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. “ But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul,” is the triumphant exclamation of the Apostle ; and true of them “ who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time,” (1 Peter i. 5). “ For by grace are ye *saved* through *faith* ”—precisely the very self-same faith with that described by St Paul in chap. xi. 1, where he calls it “ the evidence of things not seen ;” as we find by comparing it with what St Peter says of it, “ Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye *see him not*, yet *believing*, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory : receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls,” (1 Pet. i. 8, 9).

